DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 232 668 IR 050 307

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TITLE The State-of-the-Network: An Evaluation of NLS, the Regional Libraries, and the Multistate Centers in Relation to ALA Standards of Service for Blind and Physically Handicapped Readers. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Battelle Memorial Inst., Columbus, Ohio.
SPONS AGENCY Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
PUB DATE 31 Jan 83
CONTRACT LC-2327
NOTE 145p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; Library Administration; *Library Networks; *Library Services; *Library Standards; Physical Disabilities; *Program Evaluation; Public Agencies; Regional Libraries; Surveys; Visual Impairments
IDENTIFIERS American Library Association; *National Library Service for the Blind

ABSTRACT

This report is a state-of-the-network summary of the data collected for a systematic application of the standards developed by the American Library Association in 1979 to the agencies involved in a cooperative network by the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Based on a synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from 2-day site visits to the 56 regional libraries, NLS, and the four multistate centers (including interviews and observation), documents supplied by the agencies, and questionnaires, the report provides a brief review of the background, purpose, and methodology of the study as an introduction to detailed discussions of the results. Findings are presented under five major headings: (1) organization, administration, budget, and planning; (2) personnel and facilities; (3) resource development; (4) service to users; and (5) public education and information. Recommendations, related to each of these areas, which require cooperative action by various components of the network conclude the report. Data are presented in tables and figures in both the text and the appendices, and a list of the members of the Standards Advisory Board is included. (LMM)

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FINAL REPORT

on

THE STATE-OF-THE-NETWORK: AN EVALUATION OF NLS, THE REGIONAL LIBRARIES, AND THE MULTISTATE CENTERS IN RELATION TO ALA STANDARDS OF SERVICE FOR BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED READERS

to

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE
BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

January 31, 1983

by

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Contract No. LC-2327

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) serves as the coordinating agency for a national cooperative network of regional and subregional libraries, multistate centers, machine lending agencies, and demonstration and deposit collections. NLS produces braille and recorded reading material and playback equipment for persons unable to use conventional print material. These materials are housed and circulated by state and locally funded network agencies.

The first set of standards for these libraries was written in 1961. Since then, two other sets of standards have been developed, one in 1966 and the most recent set, adopted in 1979. This 1979 version, written by a committee of The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), was developed under contract to NLS. NLS wished to have the Standards of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries Serving the Blind and Physically Handicapped* as a guide for the evaluation of the administration and services of the network agencies and for the evaluation of its own services.

Purpose

The purpose of this Standards Review project was to systematically apply this set of Standards to the agencies primarily responsible for library service, including the 56 regional libraries, NLS, and the four multistate centers, to determine the level at which each agency meets the Standards and to determine how well the Standards are met by the primary network service

* Hereafter referred to as the Standards.

agencies as a whole. Other related network agencies were not surveyed directly as part of this review since regional libraries are responsible for coordinating all services in their geographic areas including those provided by subregional libraries and deposit and demonstration collections. Services provided by machine-lending agencies were addressed separately by NLS in a national audit by an independent auditing firm during 1979-81.

Methodology

To help ensure objectivity, since NLS itself was one of the agencies reviewed, as well as to accomplish the entire review project within a limited period of time (two years), NLS contracted with an independent consultant, Battelle's Columbus Laboratories, to conduct the evaluation of the selected agencies. The Review project includes both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of each network unit covered in the project.

The method chosen to solicit data for the quantitative evaluation of the agencies combined a series of questionnaires with an analysis of published statistics. Qualitative data was collected through site visits to each network unit which was part of the project and its administering agency. NLS determined that the site visits were a vital element in the evaluation of an individual library, particularly for the determination of the service atmosphere at each library.

Several questionnaires were developed, tailored to each type of network unit covered: regional library, administering agency, multistate center, and NLS. The Standards were analyzed to determine which ones applied to each unit.[2] The questionnaire for regional libraries was in five parts: self evaluation; short factual answers; charts; exemplary programs; and evaluation of the Standards themselves. A separate questionnaire was developed for the administering agency of each regional library; it was an abridged version of the self-evaluation section for the regional library, and addressed the administrative sections of the Standards but not those related to daily operations. The multistate center questionnaire and the NLS questionnaire covered only those Standards which directly address their operations.

The Standards address all areas of network agency operation including organization, administration, budget and planning, resource management, patron service and public education. Both qualitative and quantitative measurements are provided in the document as benchmarks. To supplement these benchmarks and to reflect current practices within the network, Battelle researchers developed a "Performance Measures and Scope Notes" document. This document specifically stated the measurements to be used in measuring compliance with each standard.

Throughout the conduct of the project, Battelle was advised by a Standards Review Board comprised of representatives of groups affected by the Standards.[3] These included representatives of patron groups, regional libraries, administering agencies, NLS, and the American Library Association. This Board reviewed all questionnaires, participated in the development of "Performance Measures and Scope Notes," and provided other guidance as needed.

The data, collected from published sources and from the network units themselves, needed extensive revision in order to provide comparable statistics among the various units. Each regional library was assigned to a size category, based on several variables including circulation and readership. This allowed comparison of libraries of similar size and scope.

Two-day site visits provided researchers the opportunity to observe the library operation and to interview the staff who provide the direct service to patrons. Questionnaire data was reviewed and updated based on these observations. The results of the data collection and site visits are individual written reports for each agency evaluated. These reports are organized to correspond to the organization of the Standards. Written comments from network librarians on the Standards themselves were also compiled and transmitted to the American Library Association, for the proposed revision of the Standards.

State-of-the Network Report

This report is a state-of-the-network summary of the data collected for all the agencies. It reflects how the network as a whole meets the Standards. It is organized, as the individual reports are, to correspond to the Standards.

Each regional library was assigned to a size category. In the individual reports, there were four categories based on several variables, including readership and circulation. In this report, there are three categories; the two mid-size categories have been combined. The site visits and analysis of the network libraries indicated that there was little difference in the actual provision of service between the two mid-size categories. For a more accurate comparison in the state-of-the-network report, the largest libraries and the smallest libraries have been separated from medium size libraries.

This report is based on a synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the site visits and the questionnaires. Tables are supplied where it is possible to tabulate factual data. In other cases, data is collectively presented by size category.

PART 1. ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET AND PLANNING

This report is based on observations at regional libraries, multistate centers, and NLS between September 1981 and September 1982, and on documents supplied by the agencies.

Library Service to the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The national network of libraries serving the blind and physically handicapped has been in place since 1931. That year, as a result of the Pratt-Smoot Act, the Library of Congress designated 18 regional libraries to distribute the embossed books published by the Library of Congress to the adult blind. The United States and its territories were divided into regions, and each library served all eligible readers in its geographic area. This was the first time that library service to the blind had been coordinated; prior to 1931, various public and private agencies, including some libraries, produced and distributed braille reading material. In 1934, books recorded on 33 1/3 rpm discs and phonographs were added to the national program. In 1952, the program was extended to blind children. Two more changes in the legislation authorized the Library of Congress to develop and circulate a collection of music instructional materials and scores (1962), and to serve persons with physical handicaps that limit the use of conventional print (1966). During the ensuing years, the network of libraries and other agencies continued to grow. Additional regional libraries were designated, usually on a state-by-state basis by the mid-1970s, each state (except Wyoming and North Dakota), Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia had at least one regional library to serve its eligible readers. The materials development program continued as well, and by 1969 books on cassette tape and cassette machines were part of the national program. Other developments, including establishment of subregional libraries and multistate centers, have increased the network's ability to provide comprehensive patron services to the more than 350,000 individuals who are registered for service.

Organization and Legal Basis

The legal basis for the existence of NLS is Public Law 89-522, 89th Congress, S.3092, July 30, 1966. This law authorizes the furnishing of books and other materials to eligible readers. Eligibility requirements are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 701.10). The Network Division of NLS is the authority on questions of eligibility throughout the network.

The Standards state that each network unit will have a clearly defined legal basis for its existence. This standard is met in varying degrees by the network. Some libraries have no legislative authority to operate a regional library, while others have very specific authorization to serve blind and physically handicapped readers. Several states, particularly those in which the state library agency operates and/or funds a regional library (RL), have broad legislative authority to ensure library service to all citizens. The operation of the RL is assumed to be part of this authority. Table 1 summarizes the types of legislation and the number of libraries in each category.

Those libraries which do not have any legislation describing their operation of a regional library should work with their administering agency to develop such legislation. Within the past two years, there has been at least one instance where the lack of such legislative authority was a threat to the existence and funding of a RL.

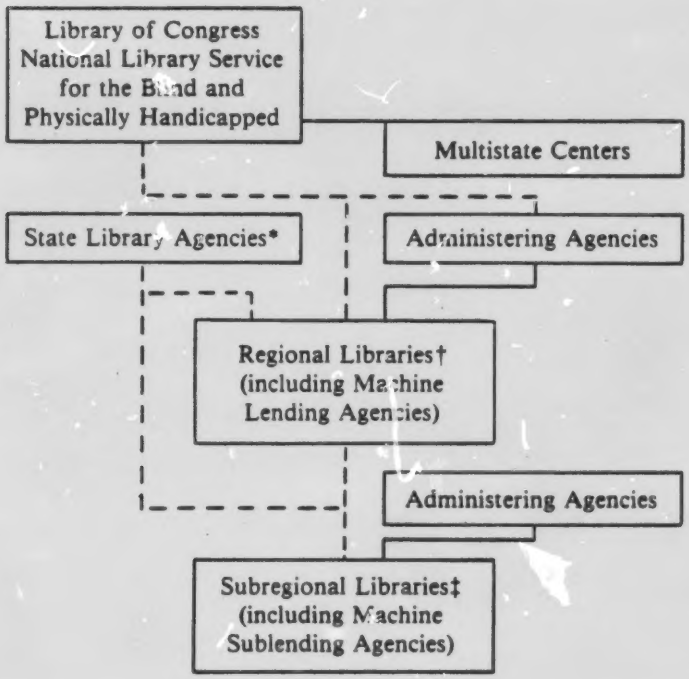
The Standards recommend a network organization which outlines an advisory relationship between NLS and regional libraries, between NLS and administering agencies, and between regional and subregional libraries. Lines of direct authority exist between NLS and multistate centers and between administering agencies and regional or subregional libraries (Figure 1). The network is organized in this manner.

The organization and administration of RLs often depends upon the type of administering agency (Table 2). Of the 56 RLs, 39 are in state library agencies, 10 are in public libraries, one is administered by a school for the blind, two are administered by commissions for the blind, two are in

TABLE 1. TYPES OF AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION FOR REGIONAL LIBRARIES (4.1.1.1)

Regional Library Category (N = 56)	Specific to Regional Library	Part of Overall General Authority	None	Other
Large (n = 14)	8	4	0	2
Medium (n = 25)	14	8	2	1
Small (n = 17)	5	10	2	-
Total	27 (48%)	22 (39%)	4 (7%)	3 (5%)

Figure 1. Recommended Organization of the Network of Library Services for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals



Note:
——— Indicates line of direct authority.
– – – Indicates advisory relationship.

*The state library agency frequently is the administering agency for the regional library. As of April 15, 1979, 34 regional libraries were administered by the state library agencies; 22 by other libraries or agencies. Where the state library is not the administering agency, it has an important planning and consulting relationship with the regional library. State library agencies and LC/NLS should develop and maintain a close working relationship.

†The regional library is the basic organizational unit in the network. It receives materials and reference and consultant services from LC/NLS and supporting services from its multistate center. In many states the regional library is part of the state library agency; in others, the state library agency acts in an advisory capacity. The machine lending agency is generally, but not always, located in the regional library.

‡Subregional libraries exist in some but not in all states and are administered by public library systems, generally located in metropolitan areas. They receive materials from LC/NLS and supporting services from their regional library.

(From: Standards of Service for the LC Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, page 18)

TABLE 2. TYPE OF ADMINISTERING AGENCIES

Regional Library Category (n = 56)	State Library Agency	Public Library	Commission for the Blind	Department of Education	Other*
Large (n = 14)	6	5	1	1	1
Medium (n = 25)	18	4	1	0	2
Small (n = 17)	15	1	0	1	0
All (n = 56)	39 (20%)	10 (17%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	3 (5%)

*School for the Blind, Department of Human Services, and a private agency providing services for the blind.

state departments of education, and three are in other agencies. In 9 cases, the administering agency is separate from the funding agency. Seven of the libraries that are administered by public libraries receive their funding from state library agencies, as does one administered by a private agency. One RL is administered by a school for the blind, but is funded by the state commission for the blind (4.1.1.3(1).

In most cases, the RLs have department or section status within their administering agencies. Seven of the RLs in public libraries have branch status; the others are departments. The heads of regional libraries have at least the same administrative level as heads of units at a similar level in the administrating agency and sometimes an even higher level. In only two cases is the regional librarian at a level below heads of similarly placed units (4.1.1.2).

The availability of organization charts for the RL usually depends upon its size. The large libraries have organization charts for their operations, as well as charts which indicate their positions within the administering agency. Few of the small libraries have organization charts, usually because they have so few staff members. Medium size libraries vary in whether or not there is an organization chart for RL operations, although most of the administering agencies have one (4.1.3.2).

Long-Range Planning

According to the Standards, each network library should have an explicit statement of goals and objectives (4.1.1.5). The plans should be developed to reflect the needs of users and to reflect the related programs at the state, local, and national levels.

Very few of the RLs have adequate long-range plans which were developed to define the specific activities of the RL. The largest libraries are the strongest in this area. Six of the libraries in this category have long-range plans, usually spanning five years, which were written for the RLs. However, of these six, two of the plans have expired; that is, the five year period has passed and the plans have not been updated. Of the other large libraries, five have no written long-range plan and two are mentioned in their

state's LSCA long-range plan. One of the libraries is in the process of writing a long-range plan.

Among the medium size libraries fourteen rely on the state libraries' LSCA long-range plans. Four of these supplement the LSCA plans with goals and objectives for the RL. Five medium size libraries have long-range plans written for the RL. Two of these were written as part of the budget process. Only two of the medium size RLs have plans that were developed as part of the overall management of the RL; that is, not as part of another process, whether the LSCA or budget process. Three of the medium size RLs have no long-range plan at all. Two libraries are writing long-range plans.

The smallest libraries either rely on the state libraries' LSCA plans or have no long-range plans at all. Of the 17 libraries in this category, 12 of the libraries rely on the LSCA plans; only three RLs supplement these plans with library-specific documents. Five of the RLs have no long-range plans, but one library has a plan in process.

The plans tend to be written in broad goal statements, such as "to provide high quality library service to all eligible readers," without any objectives or activities defined for the provision of the service, the resources required to provide it, or the evaluation techniques to be applied.

Evaluation of the RLs in relation to their long-range plans is minimal. While most of the RLs indicated that some review of the plans takes place, there is little documentation of this review or of any evaluation of success a RL had in meeting its goals and objectives. Only two of the long-range plans reviewed included any performance measurements to gauge such success.

The planning process in many of the RLs appears to be a one-time exercise, performed at the time the plan is written. In many cases, the plans are written, approved by the appropriate agencies, and then filed. Few of the RLs use their plans as a blueprint for their activities. This is due in part to the broad approach the plans take, but it is also because many of the regional librarians do not view planning as a dynamic, on-going process, but as a one-time exercise.

Many of the regional libraries stated that the RL had no long-range plan because none was required by the administering agency. This is another indication that the network librarians may underestimate the value of long-range planning. A well-managed library would need a plan regardless of the requirements of other agencies.

While there are exceptions, particularly among the large libraries, it appears that the development and implementation of long-range plans is one of the areas in which the network is the weakest. NLS and the RLs should identify areas in which NLS can assist the libraries in writing their plans. NLS already provides data to the RL to use in their plans, but NLS should consider including a workshop session on long-range planning at one of the biennial conferences.

NLS has a long-range plan which it distributes to the network via Network Bulletin. The plan and its supporting documentation are part of the NLS Director's testimony before Congressional appropriations committees. Within NLS, each section develops a detailed management plan which is consolidated into overall NLS and Division plans and then into a total plan for NLS. Every staff member is given the opportunity to participate in the planning process. These management plans are used as blueprints for section and division activities, and performance is evaluated against the plans.

Analysis of Changing Factors

The RLs are to operate as open systems, soliciting input from users and professional groups. Surveys of users are to be conducted periodically (4.1.1.5.1). The management philosophy of the administering agency, as well as of the RL, has an impact on the way a library operates. Not all administering agencies are in favor of soliciting opinions from users, particularly formal committees. Many of the state libraries rely on their LSCA advisory committees for advice on all types of programs and consider this adequate input.

Table 3 indicates the types of user adivsory committees in RLs. Nineteen of the RLs (34%) have user advisory committees that are established for advising the RL. Twenty of the RLs (36%) rely on LSCA committees, and seventeen of the RLs (30%) have no user advisory committee. Since the Standards are specific about the existence of an advisory committee for the RL, only 34% of the RLs meet this standard. Those using the LSCA committees can be considered to partially meet the standard, since in most cases, there is a representative of the handicapped community on the committee.

The make-up of RL advisory committees varies from committee to committee, but all have representatives of consumers. Many have representatives of agencies serving the persons eligible for RL service. The use of the committees for input in planning varies, too. Only one RL has documentation of advisory committee participation in the development of long-range goals and objectives. Most of the RLs use their committees as sounding boards. Copies of plans or proposals are presented to the committees for reaction, but few of the committees participate in the formulation of RL plans.

NLS meets the standard for soliciting user input through committees. Although NLS is prohibited by congressional directive from establishing formal advisory committees, it has several ad hoc committees which provide user input. Each of the committees has a representative from the four network conferences in addition to consumer representatives where appropriate. Committees have been formed to assist NLS in the following areas: machine development and evaluation, comprehensive mailing list, collection building, and automation (4.1.1.4).

Research and Development

NLS has the responsibility to initiate and encourage research and development relating to the information needs of the blind and physically handicapped (4.1.1.5.2(1). To fulfill this, NLS has an active program of research and development which it pursues to continually improve the quality of services it offers. The research and development activities encompass both

TABLE 3. EXISTENCE OF USER ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR REGIONAL LIBRARIES (4.1.1.4)

Regional Library Category	Have User Advisory Committee for the RL	Use LSCA or Other Advisory Committee	No User Advisory Committee
Large (n = 14)	4	2	8
Medium (n = 25)	10	11	4
Small (n = 17)	5	7	5
All (n = 56)	19 (34%)	20 (36%)	17 (30%)

tangible products such as the development of a combination machine which plays both discs and cassettes and the development of an automated circulation system and more subjective research such as the assessment of the use of volunteers in the network (4.1.1.5.2(1). Within the network, NLS is the leader in initiating and financing such research activities; very few of the regional libraries have the expertise or resources to initiate research (4.1.1.5.2(1). NLS has a full-time staff member responsible for the coordination and monitoring of research activities.

NLS has funded studies of characteristics of both users and non-users. The Standards encourage network libraries to conduct similar surveys within their service areas (4.1.1.5.1(2). The recently formed NLS Consumer Relations Section has the responsibility to assist the libraries in that task.

NLS shares the results of its research in a variety of ways. In several cases, such as the handbooks for automated and non-automated circulation systems, the volunteer study, the users survey, the non-user survey and others, NLS distributes copies of the full reports to all network libraries. Copies are also placed in the ERIC data base. Results of other studies have been reported in NLS newsletters, at the meetings of the conferences, at the national conference, and through informal reports during consultant visits (4.1.1.5.2(4).

NLS has the responsibility to serve as a clearinghouse for information about surveys and innovative programs conducted by network libraries and the results. This function is now done informally, as the libraries submit information. The Network Division should begin a more formal clearinghouse function to assist the dissemination of results of network surveys and new programs (4.1.1.5.1(2). Network libraries are encouraged to submit reports of these activities to NLS, and a method should be found to disseminate this information to the network. NLS tries to act as a clearinghouse for research and survey results. Regional libraries are encouraged to report results of surveys to NLS, which in turn responds to the network libraries when NLS is asked for assistance. A formal dissemination of surveys and their results could help improve the quality of individual surveys by providing examples of successful instruments, with advice on how to tailor one to a RL's needs.

The RLs have the responsibility to initiate research, as well, but none of the RLs has conducted research to develop or improve library materials. Several of the RLs have developed automated circulation systems and shared the results with the network. It is unrealistic to expect much research to be conducted by the individual RLs. The technical expertise to design and monitor such work is not available at the RLs, nor are the financial resources available to fund it. The RLs do cooperate with NLS in the conduct of its research projects. Libraries are asked to volunteer as testing sites for proposed systems or new equipment and to comment on proposed studies.

Consultant Services

NLS has the responsibility to provide qualified consultants in sufficient number to advise and assist the network and other organizations (4.1.1.5.3(1). NLS consultants are assigned as liaisons with individual network libraries in order to ensure communication between NLS and the network, to monitor the effective use of NLS resources by each library, and to facilitate the clearinghouse function of NLS by transmitting ideas from one library to another. The consultant program covers several of the standards for communication and monitoring, but there are also specific standards which address the consultant services (4.1.1.5.3).

The NLS consultant program is coordinated by the Network Division. For a number of years, there has been one full-time consultant and at least five part-time consultants. The part-time consultants each have other major responsibilities such as head or assistant head of Network Services Section, Assistant Chief of the Network Division, Head of Reference, or Assistant Head of Reference. Another full-time consultant has recently been hired to help NLS meet its responsibility for consultant services. The full-time consultants will be assisted by the part-time consultants.

Each network library is assigned a consultant and an alternate. The assignments are determined by regions, which allows the consultant to become familiar with the individual library as well as with the entire region. The

assignments, which are determined by the Network Division Chief, are rotated periodically to increase the consultants' experience with different libraries, and to allow network libraries to interact with all NLS consultants.

Much of the interaction between NLS and the network occurs between the consultants and the libraries. This is logical, since the consultant is often the most knowledgeable about the individual library and knows NLS procedures and programs. Referrals are made to other NLS sections as appropriate.

The goal of the Network Division is to visit each regional library every 1 to 2 years and each multistate center twice a year. The Standards state that a regional library with a new head should be visited within 3 months of the program head's employment (4.1.3.6(5). The Network Division tries to meet this standard; but scheduling other visits, as well as budget constraints, do not always allow the visits to occur on this schedule. The Network Division maintains a chart of visits, and in FY82, only seven or eight libraries were not visited by an NLS representative. All visits were not by the network consultants but may have been by other NLS staff from the Network Division, Materials Development Division, or Office of the Director. Although the main point of contact is with regional libraries, the consultant services are extended to all network agencies by telephone, letter, visits, and professional meetings.

The consultant visits serve a variety of purposes. These include the communication of NLS policies and programs to network libraries' staff and the development of a cooperative relationship between NLS consultants and the libraries assigned to them. The consultants provide assistance by aiding the library staff to identify problems and by proposing alternative solutions, or participating in workshops or continuing education sessions. The visits are also for the purpose of monitoring the use of materials produced by NLS and for the provision of service by each library. The Standards serve as the basis for this evaluation.

The Standards state that all consultant visits be documented by a written report and recommendations from the consultant (4.1.1.5.3(5). The Network Division procedures for both the timing of the report and its format have evolved over the past several years. Copies of the consultant visit

reports are sent to the regional library and to the administering agency. The Standards state that a written response to the reports be prepared by the library but this was previously a verbal request only and often left to the discretion of the library until fall of 1982. NLS now requests in the cover letter that all libraries prepare a written response to the consultant visit reports, particularly to any recommendations made by the consultants (4.1.1.5.3(5).

In addition to the network consultants, there are several other NLS positions which provide direct consultant assistance to regional libraries and other network agencies on specific topics. Among these are the Equipment and Materials Maintenance Officer who works with libraries, machine agencies, and Telephone Pioneers on machine repair and book inspection; the Audio Book Production Specialist; the Automated Systems Coordinator; the Equipment Control Officer and a volunteer specialist. The heads of the Braille Codes Section, the Consumer Relations Section, and the Publications and Media Section also provide consulting assistance.

The RLs should provide consultant services, as well, but consultant services at the RLs vary greatly. Only two of the RLs have a position titled "Consultant". In the other RLs, it is usually the regional librarian who provides consultant services. The consultation tends to be reactive rather than proactive; the librarians do not seek opportunities to consult with other libraries and agencies, but will respond when asked. In the cases of RLs with subregional libraries (SRL), the consultation is usually on a daily operations level, instead of on long-range planning or on organizational matters. There is little or no documentation of consulting by the regional libraries; written reports have been considered unnecessary by most (4.1.1.5.3(5).

Overall, the RLs should take a more forceful role in developing services to the blind and physically handicapped by actively seeking to consult with other libraries in their state. This is especially important in subregionalized states to ensure that the services develop in a consistent manner. The regional libraries should prepare written reports for those libraries consulted and should request responses to these reports.

State libraries which operate regional libraries often assign the consultant duties with public libraries about services to handicapped patrons

and/or institutions to the regional librarian (4.1.1.5.3(2). This allows for interaction between the RL and other libraries, but the consulting duties do not receive a high priority among the regional librarians. These state libraries should evaluate the success of this consulting and should make efforts to improve both the impact of such consulting and its priority in statewide development.

Conferences and Professional Activities

All of the RLs are members of one of the four NLS regional conferences. Meetings of the conferences are held in odd-numbered years and the national meeting is held in even-numbered years. In 1982, the National Conference was held in Philadelphia, just prior to the Annual Conference of the American Library Association (ALA). This was planned so that network library staff could take advantage of both meetings.

Most of the RLs reported that at least the regional librarian, and in some cases, other professional staff, regularly attend the NLS national conference and their regional conference at the expense of the administering agency (4.1.1.6(2).

Memberships are held by RL staff in a wide variety of local and state professional associations and consumer groups. Most of the professional staff belong to the state library associations. Attendance at these meetings varies, since RL travel money must be shared among all those wishing to attend. The general rule seems to be that staff take turns attending professional meetings within the travel budget constraints. Many of the librarians have attended professional meetings at their own expense.

Memberships in professional, consumer, and civic organizations cover a wide range of groups including but not limited to American Association of Workers for the Blind, American Council of the Blind, Lions Clubs, Civitan, and National Federation of the Blind. Many of the memberships are held in the local chapters, as compared with the national organization. Attendance by staff at meetings of these groups is usually at the RL's expense.

Participation in national professional library associations, particularly in ALA/ASCLA, is low.[4] There are 56 regional libraries with over

700 staff members altogether, but only 29 regional library staff members are personal members of ALA. This does not represent 29 libraries since some RLs have more than one staff member who belongs to ALA. The large libraries have 10 members; the medium size have 16 staff that are members; and, three staff of small libraries are members. NLS has at least fourteen personal members of ALA. None of the RLs are institutional members, but nine administering agencies are. The regional library professional staff members and appropriate NLS staff should be members of ALA and other library associations in order to support their professional development. Regional librarians should have a particular interest in ASCLA, since it is that association which wrote the Standards on which this report is based, and it is an ASCLA committee which will revise the Standards.

NLS staff are members of a wide variety of professional associations including, but not limited to: American Library Association, District of Columbia Library Association, American Association of Workers for the Blind, International Federation of Library Associations, and many other appropriate professional groups. Staff participation in conferences of these associations is governed by the regulations of the Library of Congress (4.1.1.6(2). Both official and unofficial memberships and conference attendance are listed in the NLS annual report.

Relationships With Other Libraries and Agencies

Most of the RL staffs are familiar with the services of other agencies in their areas, and they will refer patrons who request it to appropriate sources of service (4.1.1.7(1). The most common method of maintaining information about these services is with a card file of agencies with notes about their services. The staff of most libraries will refer patrons, but reference and referral are not actively promoted in most libraries. Only one RL makes it part of the procedures to follow-up on the referral to other agencies.

The consensus among RLs and administering agencies is that it is not part of their responsibilities as information agencies to actively identify gaps in community services for handicapped individuals. Most feel that it is their responsibility to seek to fill gaps in library and information services,

and to supply information about other services. Other community services, which could range from blood pressure screenings to nutrition programs are considered to be within other agencies' jurisdictions (4.1.1.7(2).

Network libraries do cooperate with such organizations as Recording for the Blind (RFB), American Printing House for the Blind, (APH), and organized volunteer groups to produce a wide variety of reading material (4.1.1.7(3). The level of cooperation varies among the RLs, but every RL will refer patrons at least to RFB, if not to other sources of information.

NLS Publications and Media Section arranges exhibits at meetings of library, consumer, and educational associations to promote the services of the network. These exhibits are staffed by members of the various NLS divisions and, whenever possible, by staff from network libraries (4.1.1.7(3). Exhibits of reading material and equipment are available from NLS for RL to use at regional and local meetings and conferences.

Policies and Procedures

NLS policies and procedures are guided by PL 89-522, advice of NLS staff and network librarians, and by the rules and regulations of the Library of Congress (4.1.1.8(1). The regulations of the Library of Congress are documented in an administrative handbook which is available to all employees (4.1.3.1(2).

NLS provides each network library with a copy of the Network Library Manual, which explains the network procedures. NLS provided each machine-lending agency with a copy of Machine-Lending Agency Procedures Manual which explains the requirements for maintaining machine inventory records. The handbook for multistate centers is in process. NLS has provided a handbook describing procedures for the Comprehensive Mailing List System (CMLS), too (4.1.1.8(1).

All of the RLs are part of a larger administrative agency and operate under the policies and procedures of that agency. All of these agencies, except one, have handbooks of personnel policies and procedures which are available for staff reference. The policies are written to comply

with appropriate legislation pertaining to the rights and services of the handicapped.

There are two types of RL procedures manuals; one for the internal procedures of the RL, such as circulation or registration and one for subregional libraries which explains procedures for the intra-state network of SRLs. Only two of the RLs with SRLs have procedures manuals which are given to each SRL. The manuals describe the procedures for interlibrary loan, statistics reporting, and other network procedures between the RL and its SRLs. One other RL does provide an automation handbook to its SRLs.

All of the SRL networks should have an up-to-date procedures manual. Such manuals provide a method for consistent application of procedures and insure that all SRLs know the procedures (4.1.1.8(4).

An internal procedures manual is important because it provides a tool for orientation of new employees, a point of reference for all staff, and helps promote consistency in the performance of the procedures. A manual is also a form of insurance against staff absences. A well-written manual allows another staff member to perform various tasks, based on the descriptions provided. The preparation of such a manual is valuable, too; it forces the reexamination of current procedures and may lead to their revision. A manual helps a new head librarian become familiar with the RLs activities.

Over half of the small RLs have written procedures manuals (Table 4). These manuals are usually in the form of loose-leaf notebooks with procedures added as needed. Among medium size libraries, just about half have complete manuals, and two have manuals in process. The largest libraries are weakest in this area. Only one has a complete procedures manual, but three have manuals in process. Five of the large RLs have some written procedures, usually for a computerized circulation system, but not necessarily organized in a manual. Network-wide, 43 percent of the RLs have written manuals; 34 percent have no manual at all; and 13 percent have some procedures written but not in a manual. Eleven percent have manuals in process. When asked about RL procedures manuals, many RLs cited the Network Library Manual, provided by NLS, as their procedures manual. This is not appropriate since that Manual describes procedures for network activities, not procedures at the specific

TABLE 4. AVAILABILITY OF PROCEDURES AND SRL MANUALS IN REGIONAL LIBRARIES (4.1.1.8)

Regional Library Category	Internal Procedures Manual	No Manual	Incomplete Manual	In Process	Manual for SRL
Large (n = 11)	1	5	5	3	1
Medium (n = 23)	13	9	1	2	1
Small (n = 17)	10	5	1	1	0
All (n = 56)	24 (43%)	19 (34%)	7 (13%)	6 (11%)	2

libraries. All RLs should have manuals which describe their specific procedures.

Budget and Funding

Few of the regional librarians in small and medium size RLs are actively involved in the preparation and justification of budgets for their libraries, and several do not know the amounts of their annual budgets. Most often, the librarian prepares an estimate of staff salaries, postage and supplies, equipment, or other needs, and submits this list to the administering agency for consideration in its total budget. The RL may receive a printout or other report of expenditures, but most of the librarians do not show a high awareness of the budget process or administration (4.1.2(1).

The large RL directors are more involved in the preparation and justification of their budgets. In most of these RLs, the director prepares a detailed budget for submission to the administering agency, justifies it to the administration, and then implements the budget once it is approved (4.1.2(1).

The notice that RLs receive about budget reductions or increases varies with the administering agency and with the financial climate of the funding agency. For the most part, RLs receive adequate notice of any budget changes (4.1.2(2).

The funding sources of the RLs are varied, but most RLs are funded by a combination of state and federal funds. Only three of the RLs receive local funds from a city or county government, and one receives funds from the private organization which is its administering agency (4.1.2.1(2).

The contributions of state governments vary from 100 percent to less than 10 percent state funding. In those cases where it is less than 100 percent, the difference is made up by federal funds, most often Library Service and Construction Act (LSCA) funds. Some RLs depend heavily on these federal funds to support the operation of the RL, which is a precarious situation in these times of reduced federal spending. Most administrators of these RLs and their parent agencies express confidence that state funding

would replace any loss of federal funds, but none of them have plans which address this possibility, nor are most of them approaching their legislators for state funding of the RL.

Table 5 shows the percentages of state funding by library size category. Almost half of the RLs (44 percent), are fully state funded, and the other half (44 percent) are between 50 and 89 percent state funded. Thirteen percent have less than 50 percent state funding and two of the RLs are below 25 percent. Those RLs in the less than 50 percent category should be seriously exploring alternatives to federal funds.

While there are a few RLs for which the long-range financial outlook is bleak, particularly should federal funds be reduced, the overall picture is positive. Many of the RLs have received increases in their recent appropriations. Others have not had budget reductions even when other agencies in their states have. Almost all of the administrators of the parent agencies express a firm commitment to the RLs and their services.

The Director of NLS has the responsibility for the preparation, submission, and justification of the budget of NLS (4.1.2(1). The budget process involves the Divisions and Sections, since the budget is derived from the management plans. The plans are consolidated into a total plan and budget for NLS, which is submitted to Congress as part of the budget of the Library of Congress (4.1.2).

Reports and Statistics

The Standards recommend that all RLs and NLS maintain statistical records to document their activities (4.1.7.1).

NLS collects readership and circulation statistics from network librarians twice a year, in April and October via forms which are sent out with a Network Bulletin. Once a year NLS sends out a survey on facilities, services, and procedures. This survey has been designed to collect data as it relates to the Standards and for NLS planning purposes. The Reference Section is responsible for data collection and analysis for both the statistics and the surveys. Its staff includes a management analyst to calculate and analyze

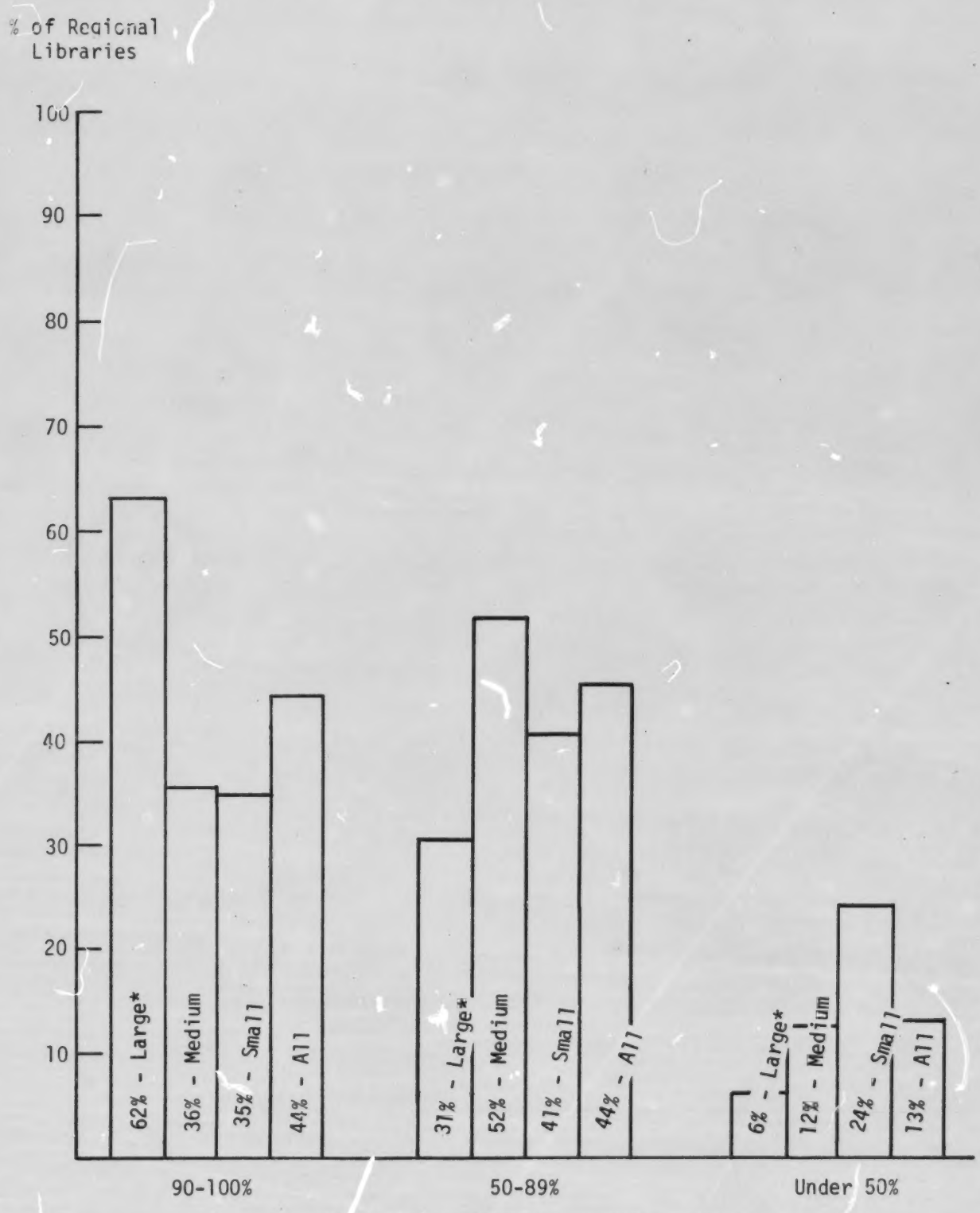


TABLE 5. PERCENTAGE OF STATE FUNDING

*Breakdown unavailable for one RL.

the data. Much of the data is reported in the annual NLS directory, Library Resources for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (4.1.7(1).

In the past, there has been confusion over the terminology used by NLS, particularly the term readership. While this confusion seems to be resolved, the problem of accurate readership counts remains. Many of the RLs, particularly with manual circulation systems, do not have accurate counts of their active readers. The numbers submitted to NLS are estimates of growth or decline. The RLs with automated circulation systems fare better, but even in some of these, classes of patrons are overlooked in the count. Comparisons between RL readership counts and the Comprehensive Mailing List System (CMLS) reveal that the difference can be as high as 50 percent.

Several of the regional librarians express the opinion that the benefits of an accurate count are outweighed by the cost of such an effort. These inaccurate counts pose several problems, both for planning and evaluation in the RLs and the network. An inflated readership count works to a RL's disadvantage in several ways. First, a RL probably will not meet the staffing standards with an inflated count, but it may be able to point out its ability to maintain service. This is unfair to RLs with accurate readership counts and a backlog of circulation, since the former implies an efficient system which may or may not be present. It is to the RL's disadvantage to have an inaccurately high count when per capita circulation and expenditure figures are compared. Planning on the network level is affected, too, since book and equipment production depend on the number of readers served. Regional libraries should make every effort to count their readers accurately. NLS should work with the individual RLs to identify those with problems and to help them solve them.

NLS conducts an annual survey of the network to collect data related to programs and services. Libraries are asked to supply budget figures, facilities data, long-range plans, various documents, and other data. The annual survey form is organized to collect data to support the Standards. The documents collected are used by the NLS Network Division to support its activities in reference and consulting. A portion of quantitative data

collected is published with the readership and circulation statistical data in the Library Resources for the Blind and Physically Handicapped directory.

There are several sections of statistics in the Resources directory including Readership, Circulation, and Budget, Staff, Collections. The data is edited by NLS to provide comparable statistics for two years, but the reporting format does not allow comparisons between RLS. All of the statistics for readership and circulation are reported by state, not by RL as the headings indicate. In order to be comparable, these statistics should be reported by library, not by state. The Budget, Collection, Staff section is reported for regional and subregional libraries, however.

Both NLS and the network libraries recognize that there are problems in the collection and reporting of the data. The educational program conducted by NLS about readership counts has helped, but there are still areas which need clarification. Data collected is not consistent from one library to another. The first step toward correcting this problem would be for NLS to develop clearer definitions for each piece of data to be collected in the survey and publicize these more widely. It should not be assumed that the network understands what is being requested. The definitions should be included with the survey forms each time they are sent out or should be part of the Network Library Manual. Detailed instructions for applying these definitions and for completing the forms should be developed and disseminated. This should not be construed to mean that network librarians cannot collect accurate data without being prompted. In any survey, especially a national one, the agency collecting the data has the responsibility to be specific about the data being collected. In return, the supplying agency has the responsibility to provide accurate data, based on the definitions.

NLS should consider an advisory committee on statistics to help develop these definitions and to identify other areas which need to be addressed in regard to data collection and publication. Network librarians would be able to offer suggestions about the usefulness of the currently collected data and for other data needed to support their activities.

Regional libraries vary in the statistics recorded for use at the regional library level. Some maintain only those statistics required by NLS,

while others maintain more comprehensive statistics. Those with comprehensive statistics have better documentation for planning and evaluation.

NLS produces a written narrative annual report and statistical summaries. This report is abstracted for publication in the Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress. The report is organized by divisions and describes the major programs and accomplishments of the fiscal year. The NLS annual report is for internal use, but NLS should consider publishing a version for distribution to the network.

About half of the RLs prepare a narrative annual report. This usually depends upon the policy of the administering agency. Few of the RLs have annual reports for the public, although a summary of accomplishments may appear in the RL newsletter. Those RLs that are part of public libraries are often included in the administering agencies annual report to the public.

PART 2. PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

The Standards recommend minimum levels of staffing and facilities to provide a full-range of library services in the regional libraries.

Size of Staff

The Standards recommend a minimum staffing level of five support staff and one professional librarian, (assumed to be head of the RL) regardless of the number of readers in a RL. In RLs with more than 1000 readers, the Standards recommend a ratio of five support staff and one librarian for every 2000 readers.

All but five of the RLs have a professional librarian as the head of the RL (4.1.3.3(1). Of these five directors, two are resigning or retiring, and one will be on leave in 1983 to work on an M.L.S. degree. It is expected that the two who are leaving will be replaced by professional librarians. The other two persons have high school degrees and are directors of small RLs.

Thirty percent of the RLs meet the minimum levels of staff for both professional and support staff. The small RLs meet this standard more often than the other RLs. Forty-four percent have the minimum for professional and support staff. Only three (23%) of the large RLs meet these minimum levels. Twenty-eight percent of the medium size RLs meet both professional and support staff minimums.

Overall, fifty percent of the RLs meet the minimum level of professional staff. This is due to the high percentage (69%) of the small RLs that meet the minimum for professional staff. Only 25 percent meet the minimum level for support staff. Table 6 gives the breakdown of the percentages of the minimum staffing level in the RLs.

Regional Librarian

The duties of the regional librarian usually consist of the administration and planning for the RL, the supervision of the daily

TABLE 6. PERCENTAGE OF MINIMUM LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF

Regional Library Category	100%		75-99%		50-74%		26-49%		0-25%	
	Professional	Support	Professional	Support	Professional	Support	Professional	Support	Professional	Support
Large* (N = 13)	3 (23%)	3 (23%)	3 (23%)	5 (38%)	3 (23%)	3 (23%)	4 (31%)	2 (15%)	0	0
Medium (N = 25)	14 (56%)	7 (28%)	4 (16%)	11 (44%)	4 (16%)	5 (20%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)	0
Small* (N = 16)	11 (69%)	4 (25%)	0	0	2 (13%)	4 (25%)	0	2 (13%)	3 (19%)	1 (6%)
All* (N = 54)	28 (52%)	14 (26%)	7 (13%)	16 (30%)	9 (17%)	12 (22%)	6 (11%)	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)

*Does not include RLs that are fully subregionalized.

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operations, and community liaison. The size of the RL dictates the degree to which these various duties are performed.

The larger the library, the more likely it is that certain responsibilities are delegated to professional and high level support staff. These may include the day-to-day supervision of staff, liaison with specific groups (schools, institutions, or public libraries), management of specific programs such as local recording or automation activities, and personnel administration. The directors of the large libraries tend to concentrate on the management activities of the RL. These directors are further removed from day-to-day activities.

In small libraries, where staff can be as few as three including the director, the regional librarian may work as a reader advisor or in other direct patron services. Supervision of the RL is handled by the librarian, but it is usually less time consuming than in larger libraries. Administrative details of personnel, benefits, and other management activities are usually handled by a section of the parent agency. Those small libraries which have subregionals do have consultant and administrative responsibilities for those programs.

The duties of the regional librarian vary most among the medium size libraries. Some responsibility may be delegated to other staff, usually specific program responsibility, but the regional librarian handles the supervision and administration. It is in the medium size libraries that planning and evaluation usually receive a low priority compared to daily activities. This seems to be because it is these libraries that try to offer the full range of library services with below minimum staffing levels, rapidly growing readership, crowded libraries, and manual circulation systems. The regional librarians spend time sorting out daily problems, but do not spend time planning for long-range development.

Reader Advisors

Reader advisors probably have a greater impact on direct patron services than any position in the network. This is especially true in RLs

with manual circulation systems, but it holds true for automated RLS as well, since RAs can readily override the system. The reason for the RAs' influence is that it is the RA who most often handles patron telephone calls and who selects and sends books to the patrons.

The requirements for RAs varies more than any other position in the RLs. The Standards recommend a bachelors' degree as a minimum level of education. In the RLs, the qualifications vary from a high school diploma to a master's degree in library science. Regardless of their educational level, almost all of the RAs work with little or no supervision of their selection and patron activities.

Few of the RLs provide specific orientation and training for RAs, beyond explaining the mechanics of the circulation systems. No training is provided on how to select a book or how to interview a patron to determine reading interests. All RAs should receive specific training in book selection and interview techniques.

The regional librarian or another professional staff member should review the RAs' activities, at least periodically. The RAs have a tremendous impact on what people read, and there is a general tendency by the reader advisors to "select out" certain categories of books for certain patron types. The result is that all elderly (male or female) patrons are usually not sent "X" books (sex or violence) unless they request them, and not always then. RAs think they were requested by mistake. Patrons in this category who do not put down subject preferences are usually sent religious and inspirational titles. Automated systems are often programmed to exclude the "X" books from selection unless they are specifically selected by the patron. While some of this is based on the experience of RAs with particular patrons or in various geographic areas, much of it is based on sterotypes of elderly or handicapped persons. Part of the RAs' training should include discussions about censorship, and patron follow-up should specifically address the "X" books. Closer supervision by the professional staff should include reinforcing the principles of the freedom to read.

Many of the RAs do not read a wide range of materials themselves, either talking books, or print books. Since knowledge of books and reading is part of the responsibility of anyone selecting books for others, reading should be emphasized. RAs should be encouraged to read books, and talking books especially, so they understand their patrons' needs and complaints.

Those RLs using professional librarians as RAs are underutilizing their professional staff. The work of an RA is primarily semi-professional, especially in the manual systems. Librarians would be better utilized in outreach, in preparing bibliographies, training RA staff to select books, or other professional tasks which would improve book selection. Answering special subject requests or other professional work should be done by a librarian, but the routine recordkeeping of RAs should not be done by a librarian.

Other Support Staff

Regional libraries have a variety of other positions but the most commonplace are:

- Tape technician--duplicates and repairs cassette tapes
- Stock handler--maintain stacks/shelves and retrieves books
- Machine clerk--assigns machines; maintains machine inventory records
- Repairman--repairs talking book and cassette machines; may be liaison with Telephone Pioneers

The responsibilities of these positions are generally the same throughout the network. Additional clerical staff such as receptionist or secretaries are also part of RL staffs.

Volunteers

NLS encourages the use of volunteers in the network. It uses volunteers itself for the production of books, but this is usually for limited production braille (BRA). Volunteers assist NLS blind staff members as readers, and others have worked on the production of the manual for teaching math braille.

NLS is involved with the RLs' volunteer programs through its Volunteer/Consumer Specialist in the Consumer Relations Section. This liaison consults with network libraries, by visits to libraries and by telephone, on establishing and maintaining volunteer programs. Data is collected from the network, but there is no systematic method of collection or dissemination of it. The Audio Book Production Specialist and the Equipment and Materials Maintenance Officer work with volunteers on book production and equipment repair. They respond to specific requests from network libraries for assistance with volunteer programs or activities on these topics. Since the commitment to volunteers is expected to grow within the network, NLS should take a more active role in promoting the use of volunteers and providing increased on-site consultation for volunteer programs.

NLS funded a study by Applied Management Sciences (AMS) of the use of volunteers in the network as part of its research and development commitment. This study surveyed the network to determine the level of volunteer use, tasks which volunteers performed, and the costs involved in volunteer programs.

The AMS volunteer study estimated that 70 percent of the network agencies (RLs, subregional libraries, and machine agencies) use volunteers. The Standards review project data indicates that 84 percent of RLs use volunteers in some capacity. Both the number of volunteers and the tasks they perform vary greatly among the RLs.

Table 7 shows the types of volunteer use for RLs. Those RLs which actively recruit and place volunteers for a variety of tasks are considered to have active volunteer programs. Those who use volunteers primarily

TABLE 7. VOLUNTEER USE

Regional Library Category	Full Range of Tasks	Recording Only	Minimal Use	No Volunteers	Coordinator	
					Full Time	Part Time
Large (N = 14)	8 (57%)	2 (14%)	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	5 (36%)	2 (14%)
Medium (N = 25)	13 (52%)	5 (20%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	10 (40%)	6 (24%)
Small (N = 17)	4 (6%)	2 (12%)	10 (59%)	1 (6%)	2 (12%)	0 --
All (N = 56)	21 (75%)	9 (16%)	21 (37%)	5 (9%)	17 (30%)	8 (14%)

for recording are in a separate category. Minimal use of volunteers includes RLs who have only a few volunteers that perform miscellaneous tasks.

The small RLs are weakest in using volunteers. Ten of these RLs (59%) have only minimal use of volunteers. These libraries usually use volunteers who come from an outside agency such as RSVP, and the RLs do not have volunteer coordinators. Only two of the small RLs have volunteer coordinators. These two RLs use volunteers for many tasks: for establishing local community groups to assist readers, for recording, or for clerical tasks.

Among the medium size RLs, 13 (52%) use volunteers for a full range of activities, 5 (20%) use volunteers only in the local productions program, and three (8%) have no volunteers at all. Ten (40%) of the medium size RLs have full-time volunteer coordinators and six (24%) have part-time coordinators.

Fifty-seven percent of the large RLs use volunteers in the full range of activities, two (14%) use volunteers only for recording, and three (21%) have minimal use of volunteers. Five (36%) of the large RLs have full-time volunteer coordinators and two have part-time coordinators. Two large RLs work closely with either the parent agency or an associated agency which recruits, screens, and places the volunteers in all departments of the agency so the RL does not use a volunteer coordinator for these activities.

Much of the machine repair is done by Telephone Pioneers and all but four RLs work with local Pioneers. Those RLs that do not work with Pioneers are usually in sparsely populated or geographically remote states or territories where there are few, if any, Telephone Pioneers.

There are two areas which need attention in almost every library using volunteers: program documentation and evaluations of volunteer work.

Fewer than ten of the RLs have written policies, job descriptions, training programs or other supporting material for the volunteer programs. Lack of such documentation contributes to inconsistencies in the program and a difficulty in training staff about the volunteer program. RLs should develop the documentation for the volunteer program.

Praise and constructive criticism are important to any worker's development, but only one RL has a formal program of performance evaluation of volunteers. Such performance evaluation should be part of every volunteer program.

The RLs have a traditional outlook on the work of volunteers, and most use volunteers only in the routine activities of the library. RLs do not use volunteers who can provide services at a management advisory level, such as planning and evaluation or public relations. Individuals or organizations can provide RLs with one time or on-going assistance to develop business plans, public relations materials, exhibits, speeches, or any other management level advice. Very few of the RLs reported using volunteers in their outreach programs to make presentations at civic or social organizations or to identify new readers. By overlooking these sources of help, RLs are missing opportunities to improve their services and operations.

Recognition programs vary from RL to RL. Most often, volunteers are included in programs and staff parties at the library, and at least one annual special event is planned for volunteer recognition. Many RLs award certificates of appreciation to volunteers and all thank their volunteers personally. The recognition programs in some of the RLs need to be improved but overall this area of the Standards is meet by RLs with volunteers (4.1.4.3).

NLS provides certificates which can be awarded to individual volunteers or to organizations in recognition of their contributions to the network. The certificates are provided free to requesting libraries and are signed by the Director of NLS (4.1.4.3(2). Volunteer activities are recognized in a newsletter published by NLS called Update.

There are RLs which are prohibited from using volunteers because of union rules or agency policy. In addition, several of the regional librarians have a philosophical opposition to volunteers, and therefore will not use volunteers in the RL. There are five libraries that are not restrained by these conditions, but do not use volunteers. These are often the libraries that most need assistance. These librarians maintain that the time necessary to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers is not available. These

librarians should reexamine the priorities and consider giving volunteer programs a higher priority.

Affirmative Action

All of the agencies are affirmative action employers, and all but two operate under a written affirmative action plan (4.1.3.5). Approximately 25 percent of the plans have been submitted to the ALA Office for Library Personnel Resources. Many of the RLs employ qualified physically handicapped or blind persons. Positions held by these employees range from librarian to page.

Orientation and Training

The Standards state that all network units should offer a formal orientation to new employees (4.1.3.6). Most of the RLs do not have a formal orientation, although an orientation program for the administering agency may include an overview of the RL. The training of new employees is usually done on-the-job.

Few of the RL orientations provide training about blindness and handicaps. Those that do tend to be limited to a film such as "What Do You Do When You See A Blind Person?" There are some exceptions to this; one of the large libraries offers sensitivity training to its staff and to the staff of other agencies. Those RLs which are part of agencies serving the blind usually have better training about blindness.

Orientation has an impact on the efficiency of a new staff member's performance, as well as giving him or her a context in which to work. All RLs should offer a formal orientation about the individual library and the network so that staff understand the operation. A committee of ASCLA or of conference representatives could develop a package orientation, including training about blindness and physical handicaps, which could be tailored to an individual RL situation.

NLS provides a 3-day orientation to its facilities, staff, and procedures. This orientation is attended by all new NLS staff, and is open to attendance by network librarians and other network staff, as well as contractors. Staff of agencies working with blind and handicapped persons are encouraged to attend. The orientation includes presentations by each section about its activities and responsibilities and allows time for questions from participants. An orientation is scheduled when interest is expressed, and is usually given every other month (4.1.3.6(3).

Most RLs are able to send at least the head of the RL, and sometimes other staff, to the orientation at NLS. Those who have attended report a better understanding of NLS operations (4.1.3.6(3).

Multistate centers offer orientation to network librarians but few take advantage of it. Tours are given of the facilities when biennial conferences occur in the cities where the multistate centers are located, but this is not on a regular schedule since the meeting sites vary. Because it is seldom possible for network librarians to attend a multistate center orientation, NLS should develop a videotape orientation to MSC operations as part of its training series.

There are few formal orientations for new subregional librarians, although most RLs with SRLs have at least annual meetings of all the SRL heads (4.1.3.6(4). Workshops are usually part of these annual meetings.

All of the RLs' staffs have the opportunity to participate in continuing education activities, although participation is more vigorously promoted at some RLs (4.1.3.6). The constraint on these activities is usually the budget or the availability of appropriate courses. All RLs reported that at least some staff participated in continuing education activities in FY81. This is an important part of staff development, and RLs should continue to encourage participation.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are available in all RLs for most positions (4.1.3.2). A few of the RLs rely on generic descriptions for positions which

are common in the administering agency (e.g., Librarian I or stock handler). These may be tailored to specific RL positions. Most of the RLs have job descriptions specific to the RL's positions. The availability of an organization chart for the RL depends upon its size, but large RLs usually have a chart which shows the functions of the RL and their relationships to the whole. Most of the small libraries do not have organization charts since many of these libraries have fewer than five employees. Organization charts are usually available for the medium size libraries.

Physical Facilities

The Standards suggest minimum facilities necessary for the operation of a regional library, and they assume that the RLs are public service facilities. While it is difficult to generalize about RL facilities, it appears that there was a trend to build or lease RL facilities in industrial parks, or to put them in areas closed to the public in state or public libraries. The justification is that RL service is primarily mail order, and that the RL collections take up a lot of stack space. Within the last several years, the trend appears to be reversing. Several states have built new buildings specifically designed to serve blind and physically handicapped readers. These are showcases of physical accessibility and public service. These states should be commended on their attitude of mainstreaming blind and physically handicapped library services.

The RLs vary widely in their approach to facilities organization and management. Table 8 gives the breakdown of types of facilities of the RLs. Some of the RLs have two types of facilities: work and storage areas, and a public service center.

Table 3 of the Standards (page 28) lists the types of facilities necessary in a RL. Only those RLs which have buildings designed as RLs meet all of the Standards. This includes both new construction and buildings which have been remodelled.

Few of the RLs which are in warehouses have adequate reception areas or reading rooms, although often a makeshift area can be devised for walk-in

TABLE 8. TYPE OF FACILITIES OF REGIONAL LIBRARIES

Regional Library Category	Public Service Area of Public or State Library	Non-Public Area of Public or State Library	Separate Library Building for RL	Warehouse	Other
Large (n = 14)	2	3	4	4	2
Medium (n = 25)	7	5	5	8	3
Small (n = 17)	3	8	2	4	1
All* (n = 56)	12 (21%)	16 (29%)	11 (20%)	16 (29%)	6 (11%)

*Total more than 56 since several have non-public facilities for most RL activities but have a public access area, too.

patrons. Conference rooms are not available in most of the warehouse facilities, but most other RLs have access to conference rooms as needed.

The area of the Standards which is the weakest, even in the new buildings, is staff work areas. These are often overcrowded, with staff working very close together. This limits privacy for telephone interviews with patrons or for quiet work. One reason for the overcrowded conditions among RLs with manual circulation systems is the need to maintain extensive, space-consuming paper files of patron records and circulation materials. A collection of NLS bookcards of all titles, for example, does not easily fit on a standard size office desk so additional tables are required to hold the bins or trays. Depending on the type of circulation system, bins of visi-records or file cabinets for folders add to the space problem. Some of the RLs are so crowded that there is no space for volunteers to work. Automation of the circulation systems will help allievate the problem by allowing paper files to be discarded.

All but one of the large RLs have private offices for the regional librarian, and those with assistant heads usually have private offices for that librarian. Medium size libraries vary; 17 have private offices for the head librarian, and 6 have offices for the assistant. Small libraries usually have one large work area shared by all RL staff and only six have private offices for the head librarian.

Twenty-one of the RLs have an equipment repair area, either for staff or Pioneers, although the amount of repair varies among RLs. Many chapters of Pioneers have their facilities in telephone company buildings and prefer this arrangement.

Receiving and shipping docks must be available at all RLs since so much bulk mail is handled by each library. In some RLs, the stacks are on upper levels and the docks at street level causing traffic and loading problems. Most of the docks are adequate to handle the flow, but almost all are over-crowded at various times of day. The lack of an adequate sorting area affects the work flow, since the books back-up on the shelves or tables and overflow into other areas. This is a problem in small libraries with large circulations.

There are no uniform arrangements for shelving in RLs although the majority shelve cassettes and discs separately by book number. Braille is usually shelved by accession number, although two or three RLs shelve braille by Dewey classification to facilitate browsing. At least one of those RLs plans to reshelve their braille by book number.

RLs usually use standard library shelving which is 7 1/2 feet high. Some of the RLs, particularly those in warehouses, use 12 foot shelving. Many of the RLs have adopted the shelving of cassettes short-end-out to save space. NLS has supplied book number labels to make locating these books easier. While converting to this method of shelving takes time since the labels must be affixed and the books shifted, the resulting space savings is considered beneficial by the RLs.

While the complaint of the network has been that RLs are rapidly outgrowing their space, with two or three notable exceptions, RLs have been able to manage their collections within the space available. The area in which RLs need to concentrate is growth space. Weeding campaigns in many of the RLs are rapidly becoming necessary in order to allow the collection to grow in the number of titles while maintaining a constant volume within the space available.

The Standards state that all RLs must be physically accessible, and convenient to reach and use (4.1.5; 4.3.1(3). All of the RLs except one are technically physically accessible, but several of the RLs have makeshift ramps which must be brought out on request or have problems which obstruct accessibility. Most have accessible restrooms for public use.

About one third of the RLs do not have signs on the exterior of the building to indicate the presence of the RL. All of the RLs should have signs, even if they are part of another agency in the same building, both for public awareness and to increase accessibility.

As noted earlier, many of the RLs (and state libraries, too) are located in industrial parks. This cannot be considered convenient, since these usually are away from business districts and areas of pedestrian traffic. Some of the RLs are in deteriorating urban neighborhoods which discourage pedestrians. All of the RLs in cities which have public

transportation are theoretically accessible by bus or train, but most patrons do not visit the RL, either because the RL is not convenient to a transit stop, or because it is on a complicated route, or because of safety. Most patrons arrive by auto, and RLs which have public parking have reserved spaces for handicapped drivers.

The location of an RL within a building affects its accessibility. Many of those RLs which share space with a state or public libraries have had their work areas relegated to non-public areas, often basements. This is an acceptable arrangement as long as there is a public service area for walk-in patrons that is continuously staffed, which is the case in most of the RLs in this situation. In all cases, signs are needed to direct patrons to the RL, but most RLs do not have directional signs. Some of the RLs are in labyrinthine single story buildings or in multistory buildings. In these cases, it is even more important to have signs.

NLS Facilities

The Standards describe the space needs of a library providing direct patron services and do not address the needs of NLS. This section describes the facilities of NLS on Taylor Street in northwest Washington, DC. NLS has access to another facility, a warehouse, to store the archival collection and other materials in Landover, Maryland.

NLS moved to the Taylor Street Annex (TSA), a remodelled warehouse, in 1967. NLS had been on Capitol Hill in the Library of Congress, but the collection and administrative offices were in separate buildings. This, plus the need for much more space than could be reasonably afforded in existing LC facilities on Capitol Hill, prompted the move to TSA. There are no plans to move NLS back to Capitol Hill.

NLS is near public transportation, but most visitors arrive by private auto or taxi. There is free parking for employees and visitors. There is a space near the elevator entrance which is always reserved and may be used by handicapped drivers. All visitors must request a parking permit. The building is technically accessible to handicapped visitors and employees

by an elevator from the roof parking and through the loading dock area, but this is not a welcoming approach to visitors. There are plans to remodel the front garage into a reading room and reception area with a ramped entrance. These plans to improve accessibility should be vigorously pursued so that NLS will have facilities appropriate to its national role.

NLS has a reception area which is continuously staffed during the public hours, 8-4:30. The area includes seating, and brochures are on display. There are two conference rooms which can be combined to form a large room for meetings or workshop sessions. The Reference Section has a reading area and there is space in the Music Section for readers. The Consumer Relations Section has a reception/conference area of its own for visitors. NLS has few drop-in patrons, since Washington, D.C. residents are served by the District of Columbia Regional Library, but it is visited by regional librarians, persons from agencies serving blind and handicapped individuals, international delegations, and on occasion patrons visiting Washington.

NLS contracted with an architect to survey the building and analyze the workflow and organizational interaction. The architect made suggestions for improvement in the facility. Changes to NLS interior space are being implemented to provide a more attractive, functional working area and to maintain more efficient storage space. The building is tri-level with staff offices and storage space on each level. The plans call for having all staff offices on the second floor, once it has been renovated to have lower ceilings for noise reduction, and improved climate control. Storage of all collections will be on the lower levels. The audio studio will remain in the lower level. NLS has approximately 80,000 square feet at TSA; 50,000 for offices and support activities and 30,000 for storage.

PART 3. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

All levels of the network share the responsibility for resource development. NLS provides the regional libraries and multistate centers with reading materials in special formats and with related playback equipment for distribution to eligible patrons. Musical scores, books about music, and instructional music recordings are an exception. NLS develops, maintains, and circulates a music collection for the entire network. NLS also maintains an archival collection of materials it produces in quantity, and small circulating collections of materials in all NLS-produced formats for use in international interlibrary loans and serving U.S. citizens living abroad. The RLs supplement the national collections with locally-produced books and magazines which are of regional interest, and by providing access to commercial spoken word recordings and large-print books.

NLS Responsibilities for Production and Collection Maintenance

NLS is responsible for contracting for the production of materials produced in quantity in sufficient numbers to enable requests for popular book titles to be filled within one year (4.2.1.1(1). Materials produced in quantity include: approximately 2,000 book titles selected each year for production in braille, flexible cassettes, and disc formats, and about 75 popular magazines produced in braille format.

NLS contracts for the production of these materials with several different contractors. Magazines are circulated directly from the manufacturer to each user as recommended in the Standards (4.2.1.1(1). The quantity of books produced is determined from the quotas set for each network library through the copy allotment system. Each RL and each large SRL has an opportunity to specify the number of copies it needs to satisfy requests. The availability of materials in sufficient quality to meet demand depends in large part on the extent to which network libraries know their readers' interests and can predict how many copies of a particular title will be needed.

Sufficient data do not exist to determine the exact extent to which this standard is met. The type of data needed to measure the amount of time patrons have to wait for specific titles is not easily and systematically obtained from the manual circulation systems used by most network libraries. Two options are available to network libraries for cases in which the library might not have requested a sufficient number of copies to meet demand. These options are: to request the materials from a Multistate Center (MSC); or for cassettes, to duplicate them in-house.

NLS has responsibility for soliciting input from users and from network libraries as to the titles that should be produced in limited quantity (4.2.1.1(2). Limited production materials include hand-copied braille (BRA'S) and foreign-language materials. NLS obtains input through an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Collection-Building Activities comprised of representatives from network libraries, consumer groups, and individual consumers; and through requests submitted by patrons directly or via network libraries.

The major problem with BRAs is not the specific titles that are produced, but the lack of a sufficient number of copies to meet the demand. To address the adverse effect this has on its service image, NLS has developed a program of having the multistate centers request an additional copy of each BRA which has at least eight persons waiting to read it. The program includes services of a prison near NLS where additional copies are made to meet this demand. NLS should, as well, identify another means of informing braille readers of the full range of BRA titles available. Production periodically of a catalogue of the BRA titles would allow readers to select from titles produced earlier than those announced bi-monthly in Braille Book Review. Spreading demand over the whole collection would reduce the amount of time readers must wait for receiving a title.

NLS is responsible for procuring talking book and cassette machines in sufficient number for distribution to all eligible leaders. The Standards state that estimates of the quantity produced should be based on the number of machines actually needed during the past five years (4.2.1.1(3).

NLS meets this standard through an extensive network-wide control and reporting system for machines. Each month, network libraries and other

agencies with Machine-Lending Agreements report to NLS, among other machine statistics, the number of machines distributed, the number of working machines on hand, and the number of machines awaiting repair. NLS bases the number of new machines to be produced on usage statistics for the past five years, estimates of new readers, and on estimates solicited from the network libraries. On a continuing basis, NLS assures that there is a sufficient quantity of machines to meet demand through its training and consultant program for machine repair. This program includes the training of Telephone Pioneer groups by NLS machine experts on request from the network libraries and the preparation and distribution of detailed procedures manuals for the maintenance and repair of machines. NLS monitors the number of machines in need of repair throughout the network by compiling the monthly statistics reported by the libraries and calling those libraries with the highest number in need of repairs to discuss any problems or to provide assistance. An example of a network-wide action recently taken by NLS as a result of this monitoring process was contracting for the repair of approximately 15,000 machines from the network.

Overall, regional libraries have had a sufficient supply of machines to meet demand, although they have not had a sufficient number of cassette machines recently to meet the three-month supply recommended by the Standards. Temporary shortages of cassette machines have developed for a number of reasons, including a problem in obtaining batteries and a production problem with the newest model. The latter problem resulted in a recall of machines. To avoid the recurrence of such a problem, NLS added another step to its quality assurance process. This step is the production of 200 "production" machines (after the first production copies have been accepted) for acceptance prior to mass production.

Collection Development

NLS has responsibility for ensuring that a range of reading materials are available to meet the recreational and informational needs of eligible users. NLS accomplishes this by selecting and contracting

for the production of materials in quantity and by encouraging regional libraries to produce additional materials to satisfy local reading interests.

NLS' book selection process is systematic and includes input from patrons and network libraries. During the past year, the Collection Development Section of NLS developed working papers that will serve as the basis for a comprehensive Collection-Building Policy. Input on all phases of collection development was solicited from readers and libraries via the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Collection-Building Activities and directly from the network libraries through workshops at the 1982 Biennial Library Conference. The working papers developed for discussion purposes at these workshops included the following type of information:

- A plan for the analysis of the NLS collection with a general analysis of holdings by subject;
- A plan for initial drafting of detailed schedules; and
- A working draft outline for the contents of the policy.

NLS is following the ALA Guidelines for Collection Development in developing the policy and is using the New York State Library Collection Development Policy as a model.

NLS meets the standards for soliciting input from readers and network libraries on collection development issues. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Collection-Building Activities consists of librarian and reader representatives from the four network conferences and from user groups as recommended by the Standards (4.2.2.3). There is one regional librarian from each of the four network conferences, one user representative from each of the four network regions, and representatives from four consumer organizations. The Committee meets once a year. NLS pays the participants' expenses (4.2.2.3). In addition to this committee, there is a separate Children's Book Selection Committee for children's materials. This committee meets twice a year and includes nationally recognized professional children's literature specialists and representatives from the network.

Input from users is incorporated into the book selection process by reviewing unfilled interlibrary loan requests collected regularly by the Network Services Section and forwarded to the Collection Development Section.

NLS has a procedure for obtaining copyright clearance for both its own production and local production by network libraries as recommended by the Standards (4.2.3.2).

For materials produced by NLS, staff from the Collection Development Section routinely search the Library of Congress' Copyright Office files to determine whether permission has been granted on the registration form. If it has not, the publisher, author, or agent is contacted by letter for permission. The procedure for network libraries to use for local production is communicated to the network in the Network Library Manual. Most regional libraries follow this procedure, which is to request clearance from trade publishers through NLS and from local publishers directly, with notification of the request sent to NLS. This procedure appears to be acceptable to network libraries and responsive to their needs.

Archival and Circulating Collections

NLS maintains an archival collection of all titles produced in quantity and a circulating collection of titles produced in little-used formats (e.g., 33 1/3, moon-type, Grade 1 and 1½ Braille), as stated in the Standards (4.2.7.4; 4.2.7.5). NLS also retains up to six copies of titles produced in quantity, for use in serving U.S. readers abroad and for international interlibrary loan. The archival collection is stored in an off-site storage facility leased by the Library of Congress in Landover, Maryland. Materials are retrieved for scholarly research on request. Circulating collections are stored at NLS.

Reference Collection

NLS maintains an extensive reference collection of professional literature and materials in the fields of blindness and physical handicaps. This collection is maintained and serviced by the Reference Section of the Network Division. It includes over 400 journal titles, several thousand books, and extensive information files. The budget for development of this collection is approximately $30,000 of which about $16,000 is for journal subscriptions.

NLS informs network libraries of relevant literature and sources of information through Reference Circulars, Added Entries, Bibliographies, and package libraries (4.2.8.1). The Reference Section prepares and distributes to network libraries about four new or revised reference circulars a year (4.2.8.2). Reference circulars describe sources of information or services, while Added Entries is a quarterly annotated list of new materials added to the NLS reference collection (4.2.8.2). The reference collection at NLS is supplemented by the vast collections of the Library of Congress. As the need arises, NLS staff search the Library of Congress collections for specific references or materials. NLS uses the Library of Congress collections if there is a need to consult a print copy of a title produced in a special format (4.2.8.3). While the Library of Congress collections are not in the same building or site as NLS, they are accessible by shuttle-bus.

As recommended by the Standards, NLS has a demonstration collection of reading aids for the blind and physically handicapped (4.2.8.5).

Multistate Center Responsibilities

Multistate Center responsibilities are clearly defined in the contracts each has with NLS. The Standards address these same responsibilities in a cursory fashion. All four MSCs provide storage, reproduction, and shipment of reading materials, as well as storage and shipment of equipment, supplies, and publications. The MSCs provide back-up services to machine agencies (4.2.1.2).

Regional Library Responsibilities for Production and Collection Maintenance

All RLs have the responsibility to supplement the national collection with books or magazines of regional interest or titles which their patrons need that are not available elsewhere (4.2.1.3(1). There are three types of local production programs common in the network (Table 9):

- In-house recording programs operated by the RL
- Home volunteers coordinated by the RL
- Programs run by another agency with which the RL cooperates directly or by referral.

The most common type, and the one which seems to provide the best results, are the in-house recording programs. Twenty-three RLs operate this type of program (41%). These RLs usually have at least one soundproof recording booth for volunteers to use. The quality of the books produced in these booths tends to be better than home recorded books.

Fourteen (25%) of the RLs coordinate home volunteers who use either RL-owned equipment or their own equipment to record books on cassette. One of the large RLs has a national network of such volunteers and it produces over 40 titles per month.

Twenty RLs cooperate with other agencies to produce books. These RLs tend to have a less active role in the selection of books to be produced, and usually refer patrons with a particular need to these agencies. While this fulfills one of the Standards (4.3.5), the RLs should take an aggressive role to supplement their collections with appropriate regional titles.

There are seven RLs that have no local production capability at all. All RLs should have the ability to provide their patrons with needed material. These RLs should be planning for the development of local production programs.

Another measure of the local production program is the title output of the RL. About 20 percent of the RLs produce 100 or more titles a year. Thirty-eight percent produce between 40 and 100 titles per year. Between that

TABLE 9. TYPES OF LOCAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMS

Regional Library Category	In-House Recording	Home Recorders	Cooperative with Other Agency	None
Large (n = 14)	5	3	6	2
Medium (n = 25)	14	5	8	3
Small (n = 17)	4	6	6	2
All* (n = 56)	23 (41%)	14 (25%)	20 (36%)	7 (13%)

*Totals more than 56, since overall RLs have more than one type of recording program.

and the next break, there is a big drop in production; about 27 percent of the RLs produce fewer than 15 titles per year. No title output data is available on those which cooperate with outside agencies.

While the emphasis in local production is on cassette books, about one-third also produce braille. The output of braille titles is much lower, usually fewer than five per year, and titles are usually done on demand.

The Standards recommend a minimum level of $6 per reader per media (cassette and braille) for local production. The level to which this Standard is met is uncertain since few RLs maintain appropriate data. The Standards assume a cash contribution for the local production, and do not define ways to include the voluntter contributions.

In addition to producing reading material, RLs need brailling or large-type capability in order to communicate with patrons. All RLs have access to brailling equipment, usually a Perkins brailler, although a few have access to sophisticated computerized braille equipment. In only a few cases the equipment is not in the RL but in another agency. Thermoform equipment is accessible, usually in the same city for RLs that do not produce braille and on site for those that do (4.2.6.2). Braille masters are not bound or circulated.

Large-type production usually is done with a large-type typewriter, although three or four RLs have photoenlargers. Those RLs which produce textbooks in large print usually contract with commercial producers (4.2.6.3).

The RLs are responsible for producing additional copies of NLS produced cassette books whenever the demand warrants extra copies. All but one of the RLs have duplication equipment as recommended in the Standards, but the use of the equipment varies greatly. Only one of the RLs has a written policy to produce an extra copy whenever there is no copy available on the shelf. Some RLs make no extra copies of those books, regardless of waiting lists for titles. Others rely on the multistate centers. Most RLs leave the production of extra copies to the discretion of the reader advisors, but have no written policy to serve as a guide. All of the RLs should have written policies which state the criteria to produce extra copies. The duplication

equipment should be regularly used so that its purchase can be justified as cost beneficial.

Equipment Circulation and Control

The Standards recommend that the RL be the machine agency (4.2.1.3). This is recommended because it provides total service for users, and helps eliminate confusion about service responsibilities. The findings of this project support RLs having the joint machine/book circulation responsibility.

There are fourteen RLs that are not machine agencies. In most of these cases, RL staff reported that there is difficulty in cooperating with the machine agency. Most of these difficulties center on the lack of communication about new patron service, applications for service that are rejected, cancellation of patron service, and similar procedures. The problems are compounded when the RL and the machine agency are in different cities. There is no way for the RLs that are not machine agencies to control the length of time between applications for service and machine assignment, nor to insure that a book shipment coincides with a machine assignment. There are RLs that are making efforts to improve communications, including one that is planning an on-line computer link between the machine agency and the RL, but overall those RLs which are machine agencies can provide a better service atmosphere.

Equipment control is addressed in the machine inventory procedures and machine agency agreements between NLS and the agencies. The audits of the machine agencies, performed by an independent auditor, have helped increase control at the machine agencies (4.3.2.2.2).

Most of the RLs have adequate storage space for three months of machines, although in several cases the storage areas are not secure (4.1.5).

Machine repair is an area in which several of the RLs are weak. Many RLs have a backlog of machines waiting to be repaired. The trend seems to have been to assign new machines, since these were readily available, rather than to repair machines. NLS is aware of several repair problems and has taken steps to solve them, as noted, but machine agencies have the responsibility to maintain and repair equipment.

Book Selection and Collection Maintenance

Each network library should have a book selection policy to define the criteria both for local production and for the accession of the NLS books. However, only 22 (39%) RLs have such a policy. Many of the RLs have relied on the NLS policy and do not see a need for a separate policy. However, book selection is based on local conditions, and every RL should address these conditions in a book selection policy (4.2.2.1). A local selection policy should address the depth of the RL's collection, too, and establish the criteria for the number of volumes the RL receives under the copy allotment program.

Collection maintenance policies are available in 14 (25%) RLs. These policies should define the criteria for a withdrawal of titles from the RL, a condition which will vary with local reading interests. Most of the RLs regularly weed their collections, but no written criteria are established. All RLs now follow the NLS XESS procedures for withdrawal of material (4.2.7.2).

Book inspection is part of a collection maintenance program, and all RLs should put books in reading order and rewind books as needed before they are recirculated. This has been a controversial topic in the network, but RLs are beginning to recognize the importance of such a program. 34 percent of the RLs inspect all books and 57 percent inspect at least some category of books. Only 9 percent do not inspect any books. Table 10 shows the number and types of book inspection programs. NLS inspects all returned books.

Table 11 shows the percentage of RLs using staff or volunteers to inspect books. In 73 percent of the RLs, inspection is done by staff only.

Quality Control for Production of Materials

NLS has developed stringent quality control specifications and procedures for the production of braille and recorded materials and equipment under contract (4.2.4.1). NLS assures compliance with these specifications on

TABLE 10. BOOK INSPECTION PROGRAMS

Regional Library Category	All	RC	RC Plus Stringed Books	Braille	Stringed Only	Other**	None
Large (n = 14)	2	2	4	0	1	6	0
Medium (n = 25)	10	3	2	2	5	1	5
Small (n = 17)	7	2	4	0	3	0	0
All* (n = 56)	19 (34%)	7 (13%)	10 (18%)	2 (4%)	9 (16%)	7 (13%)	5 (9%)

*Totals more than 56, since some have combinations of inspection, e.g., inspect all cassettes as returned, and doing a collection review on shelves.
**Other is either spot checking, systematic checking of collections on the shelves, or special collection check.

TABLE 11. USE OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS FOR BOOK INSPECTION

Regional Library Category	All Staff	All Volunteer	Combination of Volunteer and Staff
Large (n = 14)	9	1	4
Medium (n = 25)	13	4	3
Small (n = 17)	15	1	1
All (n = 56)	37 (73%)	6 (12%)	8 (16%)

a continuing basis through the work of the Quality Assurance Section and the Engineering Section. Specifications cover the actual recording of titles as well as the medium on which they are recorded and the containers in which they are distributed. The Production Control Section monitors the production and distribution of reading materials.

Quality control of materials produced locally by network libraries is encouraged through certification programs, training, and ongoing consultant service for local production. The Braille Codes Section of the Network Division prepares guides and teaching manuals for literary, math, and music braille codes; and it trains, certifies, and advises volunteers and others who produce braille materials. This service enables the network libraries to meet the standard which recommends that all braillists transcribing materials for the library be certified by NLS (4.1.4.2(4).

For local production of recorded materials, the procedures for certifying narrators, monitors, and reviewers are not as straightforward as for braille. This is because subjectivity figures heavily in assessing the quality of recorded materials. In the Network Library Manual and its consultant services, NLS strongly urges network libraries to follow the National Braille Association's Tape Recording Manual for recording. NLS also encourages libraries to have procedures for selecting narrators through auditions and panel selections and for continually monitoring the quality of recorded materials.

All of the RLs require that potential narrators submit a taped audition. These auditions are critiqued by either patron committees or staff, and narrators are accepted or rejected based on the audition. Several of the RLs have specific written critiques which staff discuss with the audition candidate.

In the past, no system was provided by NLS to ensure that national quality standards were met for materials produced locally by network libraries. A mechanism has been developed recently, however, which will enable NLS to ensure quality control for items submitted by network libraries for review. This mechanism is a systematic review at the Multistate Center for the Midlands (MSCM) of all locally produced materials that libraries will

make available to the network. Staff at the MSC's who are involved in this quality assurance process have been trained by NLS, and the network has been informed of the new procedure.

The initial emphasis has been on magazines, but eventually books will be included. Ultimately, however, the quality of locally produced materials depends upon the RL. At that level, training and monitoring of volunteers can more reasonably be handled. Currently, only five RLs have programs to proofread or listen to everything produced.

Bibliographic Control

NLS meets the standards for bibliographic control by producing and distributing a microfiche union catalog (4.2.4.1(1). An updated edition is distributed quarterly to all network units without charge. The catalog is available to other agencies and individuals not affiliated with the network at a cost of $50 per issue (4.2.5.1(2). As recommended by the Standards, the catalog includes data on titles produced by: a) NLS, b) other related organizations (there is only one other organization to date whose titles are included--Recording for the Blind), and c) other libraries in the network (4.2.5.1(1). The catalog is not comprehensive in its coverage of titles produced by other network libraries, because many libraries do not systematically report titles that they have produced to NLS. All of the RLs which produce material should submit complete bibliographic information about the titles to NLS for inclusion in the microfiche. The new NLS quality control procedure for locally-produced materials should also help in the more systematic reporting of high-quality locally-produced titles in the microfiche catalog (4.2.5.3(2).

Composition and Size of RL Collections

The Standards recommend that all regional libraries have the following:

- One copy of every title produced by NLS on tape and disc, and for braille libraries, one copy of all braille titles.
- Access to standard library reference works and literature about blindness and physical handicaps.
- A demonstration collection of reading aids.
- Access to large-print books and commercial spoken word recordings.
- Access to films about blindness and disabilities.

The RLs try to maintain complete collections of NLS produced books. Most have been able to do so, but several have discarded their early talking book collections. Some RLs which were started after 1931 do not have complete collections of the books issued before they were established (4.2.7.3.2(1).

All RLs have at least small reference collections of standard works such as Books In Print, almanacs, dictionaries, and an encyclopedia. They all have catalogs of special-format material such as the Recording for the Blind catalog. Access to collections about blindness and handicaps varies, but several of the large libraries do have comprehensive collections in these subjects. Others tend to have the classic titles in this field, and supplement these with interlibrary loan or access to collections of their parent agency. All RLs rely on other libraries for access to print copies of books in the NLS collection.

Only two of the RLs have an extensive collection of reading aids that the library purchases from its funds. Others, especially those whose parent agencies serve blind clients with other services, have access to such aids for demonstration. One of the RLs has several Kurzweil Reading Machines under its jurisdiction, and it provides staff and training for patrons who want to use it. There are several other Kurzweil machines at RLs, but most RLs report limited use of the machines (4.2.8.5).

About 30 of the RLs currently have large-print book collections, but at two of these the collections are being phased out. These books are circulated in the same way as the NLS and locally produced books, although there are no eligibility restrictions on borrowing. The other 26 RLs rely on

public libraries to provide large-print books. Only four RLs have collections of commercial spoken word recordings (4.2.1.3(2). Films are usually considered the responsibility of public libraries or state film centers, but several RLs have small film collections (4.2.8.6).

The size of a RL collection depends upon the number of readers. The Standards recommend a minimum of ten volumes per reader per media (4.2.7.3.2). All but three RLs meet the Standards for cassette collections and only four are below the minimum for discs. Every library with a braille collection vastly exceeds the minimum number of braille volumes; some have as many as 150 or more volumes per reader.

The Standard is one where vastly exceeding the minimum level is as much of a warning sign as being below minimum. A high ratio of books to readers is an indication that the RL should examine its collection-use statistics, and should consider a weeding campaign to eliminate copies of books that are not being used. The copy allotment level should be examined, too.

PART 4. SERVICE TO USERS

Characteristics of NLS Users

Two major surveys conducted under contract to NLS within the last five years have provided information about the NLS user population. One survey, conducted in 1977 by the American Foundation for the Blind, found that approximately 300,000 persons residing in households used the NLS program.[7] These users represented about 11 percent of the estimated total of over 3 million Americans eligible for the program.

A user survey conducted by Market Facts, Inc. in 1978 revealed the following characteristics about users of NLS recorded materials.[8] They are older than the U.S. population as a whole--50 percent of the respondents were over the age of 65. The majority (nearly two-thirds) had visual handicaps alone as a disability; about 7 percent had only a physical handicap, and about 28 percent had multiple handicaps. More females (57%) than males (43%) were users, and about 93 percent of the readership was white. A majority of users (66%) were retired or unemployed, and they tended to have limited annual incomes despite high levels of educational attainment. Most (approximately 70%) lived with friends or family, although more than one-fifth lived alone and slightly less than 10 percent lived in institutions.

The braille readership, which comprised approximately 5 percent of NLS users in 1978 had somewhat different characteristics from the general readership. Braille readers tended to be younger (54% were under age 45) and to have completed more years of education. They were more likely to be employed or to be students and were less likely to have physical handicaps. Braille readers included more long-term NLS users than were found among the readership for recorded materials.

Scope of Service Provided by Regional Libraries

Regional libraries share in the responsibility of assuring that NLS users have convenient access to reading materials to meet educational, informational, recreational, vocational, and self-development needs (4.3.1(1). The major functions of RLS in the network are to circulate NLS materials, to produce and circulate additional titles of local interest, to refer patrons to other organizations that produce materials, and to circulate or assure ready access to related types of materials (i.e., large-print, commercial recordings).

As shown in Table 12, all regional libraries circulate NLS-produced titles in disc and cassette formats. The majority (64%) circulate NLS-produced braille, while the remaining 36 percent contract with another state for braille service. NLS-produced titles are typical of those found in a large public library and satisfy a broad range of reading needs. These titles are carefully selected based on known reading interests and on patron input (see PART 3: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT). Regional libraries supplement these nationally produced materials by identifying titles of local interest and producing them locally. The great majority (86%) of regional libraries have, or participate in, a local production program which produces titles of local interest. Titles produced locally generally include books and magazines about a particular state or by authors from that state. To satisfy specific educational and vocational reading needs, all regional libraries refer patrons to other organizations that produce materials.

In addition to the braille, cassette, and disc formats produced by NLS, large-print and commercial recordings are circulated by some regional libraries. Over half (52%) of the regional libraries circulate large print, but only a few (7%) circulate commercial recordings. The majority do not circulate commercial recordings and many do not circulate large print because these materials are readily available from public libraries.

TABLE 12. CIRCULATION OF DIFFERENT MEDIA BY REGIONAL LIBRARIES [4.3.1(1)]

Regional Library Category	NLS Recorded Materials	NLS Braille	Locally Produced Materials	Large-Print Books	Commercial Recordings
Large (n = 14)	14	13	12	6	1
Medium (n = 25)	25	22	23	14	2
Small (n = 17)	17	1	13	9	1
All (n = 56)	56 (100%)	36 (64%)	48 (86%)	29 (52%)	4 (7%)

Telephone Accessibility

One determinant of convenient access to reading materials is ease of user communication with the library. The Standards recommend that all network units provide toll-free telephone lines or unlimited acceptance of collect calls for working hours and a recording device for after-hours calls (4.3.1(2)). As shown in Table 13, the great majority of regional libraries (86%) offer users free telephone access to the library. Most accomplish this by having a toll-free number, but a few accept collect calls instead of having a toll-free line. Approximately one-third of the regional libraries have recording devices for after-hours calls. The large regional libraries are more apt to have a recording device than the small ones.

Most patron calls to the library are to request specific materials or to check on the status of a previous request. Although the Market Facts User Survey showed that most patrons order materials in writing by using the order forms from Talking Book Topics and Braille Book Review, 59 percent of the librarians responding to this survey indicated that many patrons request materials by telephone (User Survey p. 5.14).

The Standards recommend that network libraries respond within one work day when the user has requested a return call (4.3.1(2)). Regardless of whether the user has requested a return call, the majority of regional libraries respond immediately by sending the materials that have been requested. If the materials are not available, however, many libraries do not inform patrons of the status of their request. When materials that have been requested are not available, the library should send a form letter to the patron, indicating the action to be taken and the expected length of time that it will take to obtain the material.

TABLE 13. TELEPHONE ACCESS TO REGIONAL LIBRARIES [4.3.1(2)]

Regional Library Category	Offer Users Free Telephone Access to the Library	Do Not Have a Toll-Free Number or Accept Collect Calls	Have Recording Device for After-Hours Calls
Large (n = 14)	13	1	10
Medium (n = 25)	22	3	5
Small (n = 17)	15	2	3
All (n = 56)	50 (89%)	6 (11%)	18 (32%)

In-Person Accessibility

The Standards state that users should be encouraged to visit the library and that network libraries should be convenient to reach and use (4.3.1(3). The extent to which patrons visit the library in person is affected by factors such as the hours of service, the location of the library, and the physical accessibility of the building. Only 14 percent of the respondents to the Market Facts User Survey indicated that they have ever visited the library in person. As shown in Table 14, more subregional users (20%) than regional users (12%) have visited their libraries in person (User Survey, p. 3.12). Reasons that users do not visit the library are shown in Table 15. The most frequent reason given was that "the library is too far away from where I live" (67% of the respondents). Other respondents indicated that a physical condition prevents them from visiting the library (16%) or that they have transportation problems (10%) (User Survey, p. 3.16).

Because there are relatively few walk-in patrons, most regional libraries have not been motivated to offer evening or weekend hours. As shown in Table 16, only 9 percent of all regional libraries offer any evening or weekend hours.

Although all regional library facilities are physically accessible to users, the convenience of accessibility and the public orientation of the libraries vary. Larger libraries are apt to have a patron reading area which is nicely furnished and well equipped and which has a staff member responsible for greeting patrons. Smaller libraries tend to have less space, with no specific reading area or procedures for handling walk-in users. Most medium-size libraries have small areas set aside for walk-in patrons, but these areas are not always comfortable and well equipped.

Although the majority of libraries can be reached by public transportation, as shown in Table 16, many are inconvenient to reach because they are located in areas of light industry away from shopping and other service organizations that a patron might be visiting in the same trip. The convenience of public transportation is further reduced in some cases, because the patron has to cross a busy intersection or

TABLE 14. IN PERSON USAGE OF THE LIBRARY BY REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL USERS

User Category	Have Visited the Library in Person
Regional Users	12%
Subregional Users	20%
Total Sample	14%

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users, Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (p. 3.55).

TABLE 15. REASONS USERS DO NOT VISIT THE LIBRARY IN PERSON

Reason	Percent of Respondents to the Market Facts User Survey Who Gave This Reason
Library is too far away	67%
Physical condition prevents from visiting library	16
Transportation problems	10
Have no particular problem	8
Library hours not convenient	4
Have no need to visit library	3
Library is not barrier free	2
All other reasons	4

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users. Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (p. 3.16).

TABLE 16. ACCESSIBILITY OF REGIONAL LIBRARIES FOR IN PERSON USE [4.3.1(3)]

Regional Library Category	Building Accessible	Location Accessible by Public Transportation	Provide Evening or Weekend Hours	Have a Reading Area for Patrons
Large (n = 14)	14	14	1	8
Medium (n = 25)	25	20	4	18
Small (n = 17)	17	11	-	8
All (n = 56)	56 (100%)	45 (80%)	5 (9%)	34 (61%)

walk a block or more to reach the library. Based on regional librarians' observations, only a small percentage of patrons use public transportation to reach the library. For patrons with cars, regional libraries are more convenient to reach, with the majority offering sufficient parking for the handicapped.

A few of the larger libraries meet the standard for encouraging users to visit the library. They accomplish this by planning and publicizing special programs or events at the library. Examples are summer reading programs for children, art exhibits, concerts, and demonstrations of new equipment.

Communication of Library Policies to Users

The Standards state that users should be "informed of service and procedures and be notified promptly of any major changes that will affect them" (4.3.1(4)). Service policies and procedures cover topics such as: how to request materials, how to notify the library of address changes, how long books may be kept, and how many books a patron may have at a time. Most libraries meet this standard by sending "how-to" sheets in large print to new patrons. A few libraries have developed patron handbooks which explain library services policies and procedures in detail. These handbooks are usually issued in large print and on tape.

Production of a Newsletter

Newsletters are the primary means used by regional libraries for communicating with patrons. The Standards recommend that network libraries produce newsletters at regular intervals and that user feedback be an important consideration in developing an editorial policy and in determining format (4.3.1.1(50)). As shown in Table 17, the majority of libraries (70%) publish newsletters, but the frequency of publication varies. Approximately half of the libraries that have a

TABLE 17. PUBLICATION OF A NEWSLETTER BY REGIONAL LIBRARIES [4.3.1.1(5)]

Regional Library Category	Publish a Newsletter	Publish 1 to 2 Issues a Year	Publish 3 to 4 Issues a Year	Publish More Than 4 Issues a Year
Large (n = 14)	11	6	3	2
Medium (n = 25)	16	5	9	2
Small (n = 17)	12	6	6	-
All (n = 56)	39 (70%)	17 (30%)	18 (32%)	4 (7%)

newsletter publish one to two issues a year, and the other half publish three to four issues a year. Only a few libraries publish more than four issues a year.

The Market Facts User Survey found that 40 percent of the respondents who received a newsletter rated the newsletter as "very useful" and another 53 percent rated it as "somewhat useful". Only 7 percent did not find the newsletter useful at all (Table 18). Most regional libraries issue their newsletter in large print only. Some also provide a recorded version. A few provide braille copies. It is possible that the availability of the newsletter on tape and in braille would increase the usage. Libraries should survey their readership to determine the need for additional formats.

Production of Bibliographies and Catalogs

Several standards address the function of informing users of the availability and content of network materials through the publication of annotated bibliographies in braille, recorded, and large-type formats. NLS has the primary responsibility for producing comprehensive catalogs and subject bibliographies, but regional libraries are also responsible for publishing catalogs of locally-produced materials and for preparing subject lists to meet local needs and to stimulate user interests (4.3.6.1).

Through its extensive publication program, NLS meets the standards for informing users about the availability and content of materials distributed through the network. Specifically, NLS:

- Advises users that it serves directly (i.e., overseas and music) about the availability and content of materials (4.3.6);
- Publishes annotated lists of current releases regularly and makes these available to all users in the network (4.3.6.1(1));

TABLE 18. RATINGS OF USEFULNESS OF LIBRARY NEWSLETTER BY THE 62 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED THAT THEY RECEIVE A NEWSLETTER

Rating of Newsletter	Percent of Respondents to the Market Facts User Survey Who Gave This Response
Very useful	40%
Somewhat useful	53%
Not at all useful	7%

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users, Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (pp. 3.12, 3.13).

- Publishes one- or two-year cumulative catalogs of all nationally produced materials and makes these available to all users of the media covered by the catalog (4.3.6.1(1));
- Produces several subject bibliographies each year (4.3.6.1(2)).

NLS advises music readers about the availability and content of music materials in the NLS collection through the publications listed in Table 19. Selected catalogs are distributed to new readers by the NLS Music Section, along with a brochure listing all available catalogs. The overseas readers served directly by NLS have access to the same general and subject catalogs that are distributed to domestic readers. These catalogs are listed in Tables 20 and 21. They are of three different types:

- BIMONTHLY CATALOGS list new titles produced by NLS. Talking Book Topics is issued in large-print and disc formats and provides full bibliographic information including annotations for discs and cassettes.

  Braille Book Reviewis issued in large print and braille and covers new braille books produced by NLS. These publications are distributed regularly by NLS to all libraries in the network and readers of that format using the CMLS mailing list (4.3.6.1(1)).
- ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL CATALOGS cumulate the titles produced by NLS for a one- or two-year period (4.3.6.1(1)). Separate catalogs are published for cassette books, discs, and press braille. In addition, a separate catalog is produced for juvenile materials. All catalogs are published in large type and provide full bibliographic information, including an annotation. Entries are arranged by book number. The braille and juvenile catalogs are also published in braille. These catalogs are distributed by regional libraries.
- SUBJECT BIBLIOGRAPHIES are published which list cassette, disc, and braille books for a particular subject. They

TABLE 19. MUSIC CATALOGS PRODUCED BY NLS [4.3.6.1(1)]

- The Musical Mainstream (a bimonthly magazine in braille, large-print, and cassette, which includes a list of new materials in the NLS music collection)
- Braille Scores Catalogs (all are in print and braille formats)
  - Choral
  - Instrumental
  - Organ
  - Piano
  - Voice
- Large-Print Music (print)
- Instructional Disc Recordings (print and 8 rpm disc)
- Instructional Cassette Recordings (print and 15/16 ips cassette)

TABLE 20. CATALOGS PRODUCED BY NLS [4.3.6.1(1)]

Current Releases

- Talking Book Topics (print and disc formats), bimonthly.
- Braille Book Review (print and braille formats), bimonthly.

Cumulative Catalogs

- Cassette Books (print and braille formats), Vols: 1974 (2nd ed.), 1974-1976, 1977-1978, 1979-1980.
- Talking Books Adult (print and braille formats), Vols: 1970-1971, 1972-1973, 1974-1975, 1976-1977, 1978-1979, 1980-1981.
- Press Braille Adult (print and braille), Vols: 1970-1971, 1972-1973, 1974-1975, 1976-1977, 1978-1979, 1980-1981.
- For Younger Readers: Braille and Talking Books (print and braille formats), Vols: 1970-1971, 1972-1973, 1974-1975, 1976-1977, 1978-1979, 1980-1981.
- Libros Parlantes, Second Edition (print with disc format), 1975.

TABLE 21. SUBJECT BIBLIOGRAPHIES PRODUCED BY NLS [4.3.6.1(2)(a)]*

• The Arts
• Bestsellers
• Government
• Health
• Home Management
• I Went to the Animal Fair (print only)
• Religion
• Science
• Science Fiction
• Sports
o Young Adult Fiction
o Magazines
• Mysteries
*Available in large print, braille, and disc formats unless otherwise noted.

are distributed directly to readers with additional copies available at regional libraries and multistate centers.

The Standards recommend that NLS publish at least four subject bibliographies a year. At the time the Standards were written, NLS was producing four a year. NLS plans for the near future to publish two large subject catalogs each year and several minibibliographies (one a month is projected) on topics of current interest. The mini-bibliographies are intended primarily as selection aids for reader advisors in the network.

Patron usage of NLS bimonthly catalogs was examined in the Market Facts User Survey. The survey found that patrons were most likely to order materials by reading the one-line description on the Talking Book Topics print checklist form. Over 40 percent of respondents reported that they use this method of ordering very often. About one-fourth of the respondents reported that they very often order materials by listening to the recorded version of Talking Book Topics, while about one-third of the respondents reported using the large-print edition of that publication very often (Table 22).

The majority of regional libraries do not fully meet the standards for preparing catalogs of locally-produced materials (4.3.6.1(1)(c)) and for preparing subject bibliographies as needed (4.3.6.1(2)(b)). Of the 87 percent of regional libraries that have or participate in local production programs, few have published catalogs of locally-produced materials. As shown in Table 23, the extent to which the RLs produce subject bibliographies varies by size of library. The large libraries generally meet the standard by preparing two or more substantial annotated subject bibliographies a year. They are usually compiled by a librarian on the staff using the NLS catalog or a BRS subject search of the BLNU automated data base of NLS-produced titles. Medium-size libraries are more apt to include annotated subject lists in their newsletters than to prepare separate publications. Small libraries tend to rely on NLS-produced bibliographies rather than produce any of their own. In most cases, this is because of lack of sufficient staff. Emphasis in the smaller libraries is on circulating books, and the production of bibliographies is given low priority.

TABLE 22. USAGE OF NLS BIMONTHLY CATALOGS BY RESPONDENTS TO THE MARKET FACTS USER SURVEY

Method of Ordering	Percent of Respondents Who Use This Method:			
	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Read the one-line description on print checklist form	43	20	8	29
Listen to most or all of the recorded TBT	25	21	15	40
Use large print edition of TBT	32	16	5	47
Use large print edition of BBR	1	2	2	96
Use braille edition of BBR	3	2	1	94
Use braille checklist order form	2	2	2	94

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users, Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (p. 3.28).

TABLE 23. PRODUCTION OF BIBLIOGRAPHIES BY REGIONAL LIBRARIES [4.3.6.1(2)(6)]

Regional Library Category	Produce Bibliographies	Prepare Bibliographies on Request Only	Do not Produce Bibliographies
Large (n = 14)	7	3	4
Medium (n = 25)	7	3	15
Small (n = 17)	3	-	14
All (n = 56)	17 (30%)	6 (11%)	23 (41%)

Registration and Initiation of Service

The initiation of service involves the following activities; 1) reviewing applications and certifying the eligibility of prospective patrons; 2) sending the new patron a welcome letter, instructions on how to use the service, and NLS catalogs; 3) issuing machines; 4) creating a patron folder or record; and 5) sending an initial shipment of reading materials. The speed with which all of these tasks are accomplished depends primarily on two factors: the completeness of the application and the efficiency of the library's internal work flow. More than three staff members are apt to be involved in this process. A librarian or senior level support staff member usually reviews applications for eligibility. A clerk generally sends the patron an information packet and NLS catalogs. A machine specialist issues machines, and a reader advisor makes an initial selection of books to send to the patron. Shipping staff are also involved. If one or more staff members are absent and there is no back-up, the initiation of service is usually delayed. The larger libraries are more apt to have back-ups than the smaller ones.

The Standards state that eligible patrons should be registered "immediately" (4.3.2.1), and that library service should be initiated within three work days after registration procedures are completed and equipment has been issued. The majority of libraries meet this standard most of the time. In many libraries, the sending of NLS catalogs and an initial shipment of books, and the issuing of machines are accomplished simultaneously. New applications are typically given prompt attention by the regional librarian and by staff responsible for patron registration. All libraries meet the standard which suggests that the data listed below be included in a manual or automated registration system (4.3.2.1.3).

- Patron identification
- Media used
- Special preferences, such as language and reading level

- Frequency of service
- Volume of materials desired
- Reading interests

This data are generally available because they are requested on the NLS application form. Although many libraries have developed their own applications, they are usually based on that of the NLS, as required by the Lending Agency Service Agreement.

One improvement in the initiation of service is needed by the majority of libraries. This improvement is to monitor new readers until they have returned the initial shipment of materials and have begun submitting requests. Relatively few libraries do this, primarily because the reader advisors do not have the time. Those that do are apt to deliver materials personally. Libraries with manual systems sometimes color-code or otherwise flag the folders of new readers for easy identification. After about six weeks, a reader advisor will call the new patron if a request list has not been received to discuss any problems or questions that the patron might have. This communication with new readers is recommended by the Standards (4.3.1.1(3); 4.3.2.1.2) and should be practiced by all libraries.

Equipment

Both NLS and the network libraries have responsibility for equipment control. Equipment includes disc and cassette players and accessories such as earphones. NLS monitors the control of all equipment in the network through an extensive reporting and auditing process. Detailed requirements for the issuing and control of playback equipment are specified in the Lending Agency Service Agreement that all agencies issuing machines must sign. Procedures are specified in the Machine Lending Agency Procedures Manual. The great majority of the regional libraries are Machine Lending Agencies for their state.

From a user perspective, machines should be delivered quickly, easy to use, and in good working condition. A process exists for achieving these characteristics of quality service. The Lending Agency Service Agreement specifies that machines must be issued within

three days of the completion of registration. The majority of network libraries meet this standard. A few libraries work with volunteers or representatives from other social services to deliver equipment personally. NLS has an ongoing research and development effort and consumer testing program to produce equipment that is easy to use. NLS and the network libraries assure that a sufficient supply of machines are available and that they are in good working condition through an ongoing maintenance and repair program. The majority of libraries have at least one person responsible for issuing machines and for performing routine maintenance. All libraries have a process for repairing machines. A few have machine specialists who repair machines in-house, but the majority work with Telephone Pioneer groups or with local correctional institutions.

Findings from the Market Facts User Survey indicated that, in general, readers do not appear to have major problems with equipment. When asked to assess the frequency with which they encounter various types of problems with cassette and talking book players, less than 8 percent reported that any problem associated with the design of the machine itself occurred "very often". The problem most frequently reported was reading record and cassette labels. As shown in Tables 24 and 25, 18 percent of cassette readers reported that this is often a problem and 21 percent of talking book readers. Receiving cassettes that must be rewound was the next most frequently reported problem. These and other problems are more apt to be experienced by elderly readers (especially those 80 and older) and by new readers than by the rest of the population. Although the equipment itself does not appear to present major problems for users, findings from the User Survey suggest that NLS and the RLs could reduce the probability that problems will occur by doing the following:

- Seeking ways to increase the readability of cassette and record labels (NLS);
- Ensure that cassettes are rewound as part of book inspection procedures (RLs);

TABLE 24. PROBLEMS WITH CASSETTE PLAYERS REPORTED BY USERS*

Problem	Percent of Users Who Report That Problem Occurs: Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Reading cassette label	18	13	12	57
Receiving cassettes that must be rewound	14	29	26	32
Finding correct side of cassette	11	20	17	52
Figuring out which controls to use	7	16	17	60
Receiving cassettes that don't play	6	24	28	43
Hearing other side in background	5	25	25	45
Receiving books with missing cassettes	5	18	27	50
Getting tapes tangled	4	24	30	42
Operating controls is too strenuous	3	4	7	87

*Includes regional and subregional users who responded to the Market Facts user survey and indicated that they use a cassette player. Two of every three respondents reported having a cassette player.

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users, Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (pp. 3.17, 3.18).

TABLE 25. PROBLEMS WITH TALKING BOOK RECORD PLAYERS REPORTED BY USERS*

Problem	Percent of Users Who Report That Problem Occurs:			
	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Reading record labels	21	13	13	53
Finding record beginning	9	20	22	49
Placing discs on player	7	12	14	67
Receiving books with damaged or missing records	5	25	37	33

*Includes regional and subregional users who responded to the Market Facts user survey and indicated that they use a talking book record player. Nine respondents out of every ten reported that they have a talking book player.

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users, Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (pp. 3.17, 3.18).

- Make a special effort to monitor new readers by calling them to discuss any problems they might be having with equipment (RLs);
- Telephone elderly readers (especially inactive ones) periodically to see if they are having any problems.

Prior to the Market Facts survey, the NLS Publications Section had started to develop specifications to improve the readability and labeling of all NLS publications, including those in special formats. These specifications have been implemented over the last several years. NLS should take steps to determine whether these changes have had the desired result, and if not, should continue to seek ways to increase readability of the labeling.

Circulation of Reading Materials

The great majority of NLS materials are circulated by mail. The delivery of materials by mail requires a broader range of procedures and record keeping by NLS and the network libraries than by libraries serving other clientele (4.3.2.2). The systems used by the regional libraries for circulating materials vary in the amount and type of data that they can store and in the speed with which materials can be circulated. While the majority of RLs use a manual circulation system, the trend is clearly toward the automation of this function. As shown in Table 26, 68 percent of the regional libraries have manual circulation systems, and 32 percent are automated. Almost all of the large libraries are automated, but none of the small ones are.

The Standards state that circulation systems used by network libraries, whether manual or automated, should have the capability of storing and retrieving the following data concerning the user and the library collection (4.3.2.2.1):

(1) User data
  (a) Identification
  (b) Media used
  (c) Special preferences, such as language, reading level, and male or female narrators

TABLE 26. METHOD OF CIRCULATION USED BY REGIONAL LIBRARIES

Regional Library Category	Manual Circulation	Automated Circulation
Large (n = 14)	2	12
Medium (n = 25)	19	6
Small (n = 17)	17	-
All (n = 56)	38 (68%)	18 (32%)

(d) Frequency of service
(e) Volume of materials desired
(f) Reading interests
(g) Requests
(h) Reading history
(i) Titles on loan
(j) Date materials sent and returned
(k) Magazines requested

(2) Library data
(a) Identification of titles and number of copies in the collection
(b) Special features of titles such as age suitability, narrator, language, media, speed of format
(c) Materials on the shelf and available for use
(d) Materials in circulation and to whom circulated
(e) Materials overdue
(f) Reserve lists
(g) Interlibrary loan requests

The majority of regional libraries do not store all of the data listed above. Those that are automated are more apt to meet this standard than those that have manual systems. Data that are most apt to be missing from the manual systems are:

- Date materials returned
- Number of copies in the collection
- Materials in circulation
- Materials overdue
- Reserve lists

The lack of these data prevents many regional libraries from meeting all of the standards for user service.

The Standards suggest that network libraries offer three circulation options to ensure that users have a choice regarding the quantity of books that they receive. These options are: books on request only, turnaround service, and calendar service according to a predetermined schedule (4.3.2.2.3). As shown in Table 27, all libraries in the network offer users the option of receiving books only

TABLE 27. CIRCULATION OPTIONS PROVIDED BY REGIONAL LIBRARIES (4.3.2.2.3)

Regional Library Category	Offer Request Only Circulation Option	Offer Turnaround Circulation Option	Offer Calendar Service Option
Large (n = 14)	4	3	3
Medium (n = 25)	6	5	1
Small (n = 17)	6	6	1
All (n = 56)			

when they specifically ask for them. The great majority offer turnaround service. Relatively few provide calendar service, primarily because turnaround service seems to offer patrons sufficient control over the number of books that they receive. Another reason that many libraries do not offer calendar service is because they do not have a mechanism for efficiently identifying and recalling overdue materials. Without more specific lending procedures than most libraries have, calendar service has the potential for resulting in loss of control over materials.

Throughout the network, lending practices are flexible as suggested by the Standards (4.3.2.2.4). However, many libraries do not fully meet the standard because they do not communicate a specific loan period to users. Those that do request that users return materials within a month or six weeks. Very few libraries follow up on this policy by periodically reminding users to return materials that they no longer need. Although it is difficult to assess the impact that this has on the overall availability of materials, it is obvious that some materials are lost because of the lack of specific lending policies and of procedures for monitoring them. The regional libraries should develop guidelines for the reader advisors to follow regarding the quantity of materials that a patron may have. This might include a review of a patron's request for more materials by a supervisory level staff member if that patron already has been sent a large number of books and there is no record of their return.

Quality of Circulation Service

Quality of circulation service is a function of timeliness of service and availability of materials. The Standards recommend a one-day turnaround time for replacing materials that have been returned and for filling special requests. The majority of regional libraries place a high priority on timely service and generally meet this standard. The few that do not are apt to have a cumbersome manual circulation system or a severe shortage of staff in the reader advisory or shipping area.

As shown in Table 28 from the Market Facts User Survey, readers appear to be generally satisfied with the speed with which their orders are filled. Sixty-one percent of the respondents reported that their book orders are filled quickly and another 25 percent responded that they are sometimes filled quickly. Only 14 percent indicated that their orders are seldom or never filled quickly.

There is slightly less satisfaction with the availability of materials. About 36 percent of users surveyed reported that materials which they order are sometimes unavailable, while another 13 percent said this is often the case. To ensure the user's access to desired materials, the Standards recommend that network libraries establish reserve and interlibrary loan systems (4.3.2.2.6). Another means for ensuring ready access to NLS-produced cassettes is in-house tape duplication. When patron requests are received and NLS materials are not available, a regional library has three options: to reserve the book, to request a copy from a Multistate Center (MSC), or to duplicate it in-house (cassettes only). The procedure that is followed varies greatly from one regional library to another. The following two improvements are needed for most libraries:

- If the material cannot be obtained immediately (e.g., within a day or two), the patron should be notified of the status of the request;
- Criteria should be documented for deciding which option to use (i.e., reserve, request from MSC, in-house duplication) and a procedure should be developed for monitoring the status of reserves.

In many libraries, the reader advisors decide, based on little or no guidelines, what to do when materials are not available. Patrons should be kept informed of the status of their requests through telephone calls or form letters. This is necessary for the following reasons: 1) reserve systems are generally not as effective as they should be because loan periods are not enforced; 2) it generally takes at least one week to obtain materials from an MSC, and materials are not always available from the MSC; and 3) some RLs do not make use of their tape duplication capabilities regularly.

TABLE 28. READERS' VIEWS ON TIMELINESS OF CIRCULATION SERVICE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS

User Category	Reported That Book Orders are "Very Often" Filled Quickly	Reported That Materials Ordered are "Very Often" not Available
Regional Users	60%	13%
Subregional Users	70%	10%
Total Sample	61%	13%

Source: Readership Characteristics & Attitudes: Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users, Report prepared by Market Facts Inc., Washington, D.C., for LC/NLS. September 30, 1981 (pp. 3.28, 3.55).

Reader Advisory Service

The Standards state that network libraries shall "advise readers about the availability, content, and nature of materials ... informally, as in day-to-day communication, or in a more structured manner" (4.3.6). All regional libraries have positions designated for performing this function, but all libraries do not provide the level of reader advisory service implied in the Standards. The positions responsible for responding to questions about the availability, content, and nature of materials in regional libraries are called "reader advisors", "reader assistants", or "circulation clerks", depending on the level of responsibility. They are usually backed up by a junior-level librarian in the larger libraries and by the regional librarian in the smaller libraries.

These positions generally have the following types of duties in their job descriptions:

- Select materials for patrons if requested,
- Assist patrons in selecting their own materials by answering questions about the availability or content of materials;
- Monitor patron understanding of and satisfaction with service by calling them periodically and following up on inactive ones;
- Instruct patrons on the use of reading materials and equipment.

These duties comprise the full range of reader advisory services suggested in the Standards. Reader advisors spend most of their time performing the first task--selecting materials for patrons. In manual systems, this usually involves a substantial amount of filing and alphabetizing. Some libraries have clerical positions to do this, but more often, because of the location of manual circulation files at the desk of each reader advisor, the reader advisor does the filing and alphabetizing.

The majority of reader advisors select materials for patrons, but they do not systematically monitor patron understanding and

satisfaction with the service, nor do they provide personalized instruction in the use of equipment and materials. The largest regional libraries are apt to have from four to six reader advisors with a junior-level librarian as a back-up, while the smallest ones have as few as two reader advisors with the regional librarian as a back-up. In libraries with manual circulation systems, the reader advisors do not generally have the time to monitor new readers. The large libraries that are automated are more apt to monitor new patrons, because they can easily retrieve usage data from their circulation systems. Most regional librarians believe that, until they are automated, they will not be able to provide the level of reader advisory service suggested by the Standards. They are depending on automation to free staff from the clerical aspects of book selection and to enable the library to retrieve data about patron usage.

Few libraries instruct and assist patrons in using materials and equipment; most simply send the NLS tape of instructions (4.3.2.1.2). Three libraries arrange for machines to be personally delivered and demonstrated to new readers.

Several questions in the Market Facts User Survey dealt with readers' attitudes toward the selection of materials. The readership was divided as to whether they liked their libraries to select mate rials for them: 51 percent said they liked the library to make book selections for them very often or sometimes, 14 percent said they seldom liked the library to do this, and slightly more than one-third said they never liked for the library to make selections. Age was clearly related to attitudes about this matter. The youngest respondents--those under age 10--were the most likely to favor their libraries making selections for them. Readers in the middle age groups--from 15 to 44--were the least likely to feel this way, with the percentage increasing again somewhat among readers older than 44 years (User Survey, p. 3.27).

Deposit Collections

All regional libraries, except the few that are decentralized, serve users through deposit collections in agencies such as nursing and retirement homes, public and private schools, and senior citizen centers. The Market Facts User Survey showed that institutionalized readers tend to be older than the general population, and that the institutionalized population includes a higher proportion of physically handicapped persons (User Survey, p. 4.20). Most of the problems which institutional readers reported in using machines were related to the fact that they tend to be somewhat older and to have physical impairments. The characteristics of institutional readers as well as the characteristics of the agencies which care for them make it necessary for network libraries to maintain more frequent and aggressive contact with them. The Standards recommend that libraries "make a special effort to maintain regular communication with the agency person responsible for group service" (4.3.1.1(2)(c).

The majority of regional libraries do not fully meet this standard. Some libraries assign deposit collections to one reader advisor to separate them from indivduals. Other libraries serve deposit collections in the same way that they serve individuals. Regardless of whether they serve deposit collections separately or together, most libraries do not maintain the level of communication suggested by the Standards. Those that do, employ the following methods:

- Visiting deposit collections periodically;
- Sending form letters periodically;
- Sending information packets periodically;
- Calling at regular intervals to see if any staff changes have taken place which would necessitate orienting a new agency person;
- Requiring that the agencies return all materials and equipment periodically so that it can be inventoried, maintenanced, and reissued.

Information and Referral Service

NLS and the network libraries have responsibilities for responding to requests for materials and information, drawing upon the resources of the network and their administering agencies as well as upon their own materials and files (4.3.3). NLS maintains an extensive collection of reference and professional materials and serves as a back-up to the network libraries. The size of the reference collections that the RLs maintain and the level of information service that they provide vary. The larger libraries tend to maintain larger reference collections and to be more self-sufficient than the smaller ones which rely heavily on NLS.

Requests from patrons generally fall into one of the following categories: 1) requests for materials available through the network, 2) requests for materials that are not available through the network, 3) requests for information about a particular service for the blind and physically handicapped, 4) questions about topics and issues of interest to the blind and physically handicapped. Regional libraries respond to questions in the first category by consulting the NLS microfiche union catalog to verify that the material is available through the network and then taking action to fill the request (i.e., from the RL's own collection, another RL's locally produced collection, or from an MSC). Reader advisors usually perform this function. Requests in the second category necessitate an awareness of the services of other organizations that record materials, a search of the catalogs of these organizations to verify the availability of the material, and finally a referral to the appropriate organization. At a minimum, regional libraries will search the Recording for the Blind (RFB) catalog and refer patrons to that organization. Questions in the third category require an awareness of the services of related organizations and an up-to-date file of addresses and telephone numbers in order to make an accurate referral. The regional librarian or another professional librarian usually handles these types of queries. Questions in the last category are generally of a reference nature and are answered by consulting printed books and journals about blindness

and physical handicaps or by conducting a literature search, in some cases by computer, to identify books and journal articles on a particular topic. The regional libraries also consult the circulars which the NLS Reference Section produces. The reference circulars compile information and resources on topics of interest to regional libraries. The larger libraries in the network usually have a librarian on the staff responsible for reference. The smaller libraries tend to call on NLS or the state library for assistance.

Timeliness of Response to User Requests

Most requests received by the regional libraries are for materials. The Standards recommend that responses to user requests, whether positive or negative, be made within two work days; and that when the need for materials is urgent, the request should receive priority handling (4.3.3.2). The great majority of the regional libraries appear to respond within two work days when the response is positive--that is, when materials or information are immediately available. When the response is negative, or when materials are not immediately available, many regional libraries do not notify patrons of the action that will be taken and the expected time that it will take. Most libraries do have a procedure for giving urgent requests priority handling. This procedure is generally for a reader advisor to document the request and to hand-carry it through the circulation process.

The Market Facts User Survey found that a high percentage of respondents were satisfied with the speed with which network libraries respond to their requests. As shown in Table 28, 60 percent of regional library users and 70 percent of subregional users indicated that "very often" their orders are filled quickly. Only 4 percent of the regional library population and 3 percent of the subregional population responding to an open-ended question on suggestions for improvement in library service indicated that they would like to see an increase in the speed of service.

User Feedback

The Standards emphasize the importance of maintaining frequent communication with users and of soliciting user feedback (4.1.1.5.1). Two specific methods for obtaining user input and measuring user satisfaction are user advisory committees and periodic surveys of current users and of eligible nonusers (4.1.1.4; 4.3.9).

In addition to soliciting user input through advisory committees, the Standards encourage network libraries to conduct surveys periodically. Most regional libraries have not conducted comprehensive surveys, usually because of lack of staff. As shown in Table 29, 55 percent of the regional libraries have conducted some type of survey in the last two years. The surveys conducted by these libraries typically solicit user feedback in one or two specific areas, or they ask patrons to rate the overall service. Survey results are usually limited in their usefulness by low response rates and responses that are not representative of the entire user population. Most surveys are printed in large type and sent to the entire readership using the library's mailing list or newsletter. A few libraries have contracted with a private firm or another organization to conduct a survey. Regional libraries need more guidance in conducting surveys. NLS has addressed this need by contracting with a research firm for the development of a consumer input program which would include guidelines for regional libraries to follow in conducting surveys. Regional libraries should study the report from this contract when it is available and seek additional advice from NLS as needed to improve the quality and usefulness of their surveys.

NLS has initiated and contracted for the implementation of several network-wide surveys (4.3.9). These include the large-scale user and non-user surveys conducted during the period 1978 to 1980, regular surveys such as the semi-annual and annual magazine surveys and the network statistical surveys, and periodic surveys to update publications such as Volunteers Who Produce Books. Three upcoming surveys are a survey of braille readers by the NLS Consumer Relations Section and a survey of music readers by the NLS Music Section and a

TABLE 29. USE OF SURVEYS BY REGIONAL LIBRARIES TO SOLICIT USER INPUT AND MEASURE USER SATISFACTION (4.1.1.5.1; 4.3.9)

Regional Library Category	Have Conducted a Major Survey in the Last 5 Years	Have Conducted a Survey in the Last 2 Years	No Survey in the Last 2 Years
Large (n = 14)	2	5	9
Medium (n = 25)	1	17	7
Small (n = 17)	--	9	8
All (n = 56)	3 (5%)	31 (55%)	24 (43%)

survey of braille and talking-book readers by the Publications and Media Section. Reports of surveys conducted by or for NLS are published and made available to the network. Together, these surveys provide data on the full range of network operations and aid NLS in identifying specific areas for change or improvement.

PART 5. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

The responsibility for public education is shared by NLS and the network libraries. NLS produces publicity materials for all to use. Some of the RLs produce their own materials.

Publicity Materials

NLS has the responsibility to produce and disseminate publicity materials as part of a coordinated public relations program (4.4.1). This program is coordinated by the Publication and Media Section.

In 1978, NLS increased its program to systematically publicize the availability of the services. Seven regions were selected for the initial program of radio and television public service announcements (PSA) with a special NLS toll-free number as a tag. The program resulted in a 45 percent increase in new readers in those areas. NLS invested $117,000 in developing five radio and five television spots. The PSA program was continued in 1979 with the creation of additional PSAs, distributed to all 56 regional libraries. In 1980, new PSAs were completed, including four TV and four radio spots plus slides and live copy, and distributed to 100 network libraries. These PSAs were personalized with the regional libraries' names and phone numbers. NLS plans to continue the PSA program. Evaluation of the success of the PSA is ongoing, but significant increases in readership have been already measured.

NLS has expanded its publicity program to include the development of materials for use in the print media. Camera-ready art suitable for use as public service advertisements in magazines which reach appropriate audiences have been contracted. The contractor will provide an approach and schedule for placing general information articles in popular magazines. At least two such articles have appeared in U.S. News and World Report and American Education. NLS prepares the articles.

Exhibits at conferences of professional and consumer organizations are part of the ongoing public information program. NLS staff exhibit at

meetings of such organizations as the American Library Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Public Health Association, Music Teachers National Association, International Reading Association, and Blinded Veterans Association (see Part 4). Exhibits are sent to approximately 25-30 meetings a year. As part of the NLS exhibits, brochures and other handouts are distributed. NLS is working to have more handouts developed which can be tailored to specific audiences.

To assist network libraries in developing their own public education program, the NLS Publication and Media Section developed a handbook called Reaching People. This is a primer for any library interested in establishing such an education program. It includes instructions for media contacts, news releases, and other activities. The handbook was distributed to all network libraries.

NLS loans through multistate centers several table top exhibits to network libraries to use at local or regional meetings. New exhibits and supplemental posters and signage are being developed for loan to network libraries.

All of the RLs distribute the NLS-produced promotional materials, but not all RLs produce materials to promote their own programs. Publicity materials tend to be produced by large libraries. Only a few medium libraries have produced publicity materials. The small libraries, with some exceptions, rely on NLS-produced materials. When a RL in the small or medium category does produce materials, they usually produce introductory brochures or posters (4.4.2.4).

Publications

NLS produces a wide variety of brochures, posters, and informational material for free distribution. Among these items, which are printed and distributed by the thousand, are braille music cards, "Books Talk", a flexible-disc/print brochure explaining the program, and a "Reading Is For Everyone" pamphlet. One of the most recent publications is An Introduction to

the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a 15-page document which describes the history, organization, and purpose of NLS.

All of NLS publications are produced through the Publication and Media Section. Other NLS offices may write the text but final editing is done by Publication and Media Section, including Network Bulletins, Overseas Outlook, Update, and other newsletters. Publication and Media developed a style manual for all of NLS publications and other items (stationary, labels, etc.) which have the NLS imprint. The handbook, itself an award-winning production, ensures that all of NLS publications have a uniform, professional style. This has greatly improved the look of NLS publications and each has the consistent signature of NLS.

All of the ongoing publications (e.g., Talking Book Topics, Braille Book Review, News Update) and the catalogs are produced by the Publication and Media Section. Another publication is a series of flyers which describe various aspects of NLS service. The series is called "Facts" and the topics are usually those about which NLS receives a lot of questions. This provides an easy way to supply basic information. The latest one is "About Braille" and gives an explanation and brief history of braille, a biography of Louis Braille, a diagram of the braille alphabet, and a description of volunteers who produce braille. The text of "Facts" is generally written by the appropriate NLS section, with production managed by the Publication and Media Section.

Publications, beyond newsletters and catalogs of locally-produced materials, are not produced by RLs. They rely on the NLS published catalogs, newsletters, and public education material.

Community Liaison

NLS works with the headquarters of such organizations as American Council for the Blind, Blinded Veterans Association, National Association of the Physically Handicapped, and National Federation of the Blind (4.4.2.1). Representatives of these associations and others are invited to sit on NLS committees, and NLS representatives have attended meetings of these groups.

NLS maintains a close relationship with professional library associations, such as the American Library Association, and exhibits at conferences of groups such as associations.

Most RLs maintain liaison with local chapters of the national organizations. This includes speaking at meetings of those groups, exhibiting library material at their conferences, and inviting representatives to sit on RL committees of interest to their constitutents. All libraries are active in this area regardless of size, although the large and medium size libraries tend to be more active since there are usually more opportunities for such activity in their states (4.4.2.2).

Most of the RLs have a mailing list in some form or other, but few have had occasion to do mass mailings of material other than a newsletter. One RL does maintain a mailing list of all of its state legislators, congressional representatives, and senators, and periodically mails informational packets to them (4.4.2.3).

The role of advocate of services for the blind is played by all RLs either directly through an active participation in meetings, publication, or other methods; or indirectly through the promotion of RL services and by providing information to support particular needs or campaigns. Few of the regional librarians submit articles for publication in professional journals (4.4.2.5).

Relationships with library schools, where one exists in a state, tend to be reactive. A regional librarian will respond when invited, but few actively seek to inform library school students and others of the services offered by the RL. NLS cooperates with universities in the Washington, D. C. area by providing information and speakers on request. The Director of NLS has taught courses at the Catholic University Library School (4.4.2.6).

Reference activity in the RLs about blindness and handicaps tends to be referral to other agencies for services or products, rather than more traditional reference activity. As noted earlier, all RLs have at least small collections about blindness and handicaps (4.4.3).

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to those areas in which the network as a whole is weak. The individual working papers presented specific recommendations for each regional library, multistate center, and NLS. The regional librarians, MSC directors, and NLS should work together to address these recommendations.

PART I. ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET, AND PLANNING

- Those RLs which do not have specifically defined statutory authorization for their operation should work with their administering agencies to establish such authority.
- Each RL should each develop a written long-range plan which defines its goals and objectives, strategies for meeting these, and performance measures for evaluating the progress toward meeting the goals. NLS should consider providing workshop courses on long-range planning for the RLs.
- NLS should continue to develop its clearinghouse function. The RLs should cooperate by submitting appropriate information to NLS.
- All RLs and particularly those which have subregional libraries should take an active role in promoting regional library services by consulting with other agencies and libraries.
- All professional staff should be members of professional associations which are appropriate to their job duties in order to aid their personal and professional development.
- All SRL networks should have up-to-date procedures manuals which describe network responsibilities and procedures.
- All RLs should have detailed procedures manuals for their internal operation.

- The regional librarians should become more aware of the budget process for their agencies and participate in this to the fullest extent possible.

- The use of federal funds to support regional library operations should be reassured, and alternate sources of funding should be sought.

- NLS should work with the RLs to refine the definition of the statistics it collects, and publicize these more widely to ensure the collection of comparable statistics.

PART 2. PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

- The RLs should improve their staff orientation programs, particularly for the reader advisors, so that all employees are prepared to work with patrons.

- NLS should produce an orientation to the MSCS on videotape for use by network libraries.

- The RLs should explore the opportunities for using volunteers to provide management advice and services.

- All RLs using volunteers should have complete documentation of recruitment, selection, training, evaluation, and recognition programs.

- The evaluation of volunteers' work performance should be a component of every RLs' volunteer program.

PART 3. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- The RLs should cooperate in the NLS Quality Assurance Program and should closely monitor the quality of locally-produced books and magazines.

- Those RLs which do not have active local production programs should be planning to implement such programs.

- All RLs should submit complete bibliographic data for locally produced titles to the NLS union catalog in order to facilitate resource sharing.

- Every RL should have a policy on cassette duplication and should fulfill the responsibility to produce additional copies as needed.

- Those RLs which are not machine agencies should explore the possibilities of accepting such responsibility.

- Each RL should develop a written book selection policy which reflects local conditions and priorities.

- Each RL should develop a written collection maintenance policy which includes criteria for retention and withdrawal of books.

PART 4. USER SERVICES

- Regional libraries which do not offer toll-free telephone access should seek ways to provide this service.

- Regional libraries which do not have a recording device for after-hours calls should obtain one, at least on a trial basis to assess its usefulness. It should be widely advertised.

- When reading materials requested by patrons are not immediately available, regional libraries should keep patrons informed by telephone or letter of the status of their requests.

- Regional libraries with public service areas should encourage patrons to visit the library by offering special programs or events at the library.

- All regional libraries should publish a newsletter, preferably on a quarterly or more frequent basis.

- Regional libraries which publish a newsletter only in large print should survey their readership to determine the need for additional formats.

- All regional libraries with local production programs should prepare and publicize catalogs or lists of locally produced materials.

- All regional libraries should supplement NLS-produced subject bibliographies with locally produced ones of special interest to their readership.

- Regional libraries should monitor new readers until they have returned the initial shipment of materials and have begun submitting requests.

- Regional libraries should seek ways to relieve reader advisors of routine clerical work in order to provide time for them to monitor inactive and new patrons.

- Regional libraries which are not automated should investigate the feasibility of automation and identify potential sources of funding.

- Regional libraries should recall overdue materials more frequently to increase the chances that materials will be available when they are requested.

- Regional libraries should devise procedures for monitoring the number of materials that a patron has at any one time to prevent abuse of liberal lending policies and ensure that materials are available when other patrons request them.

- Regional libraries should develop and document guidelines for reader advisors to follow in handling requests for which materials are not immediately available.

- More regional libraries should make a special effort to communicate regularly with contact persons at institutions with deposit collections.

- Regional libraries which do not have a user advisory committee should establish one as a means for soliciting user input and staying abreast of consumer concerns.

- Regional libraries should seek advice from NLS on ways to survey users and eligible non-users periodically to determine the need for changes in service.

PART 5. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

- The regional libraries should make a greater effort to produce materials to use in conjunction with NLS publicity materials to promote their local series.

- The regional libraries should take an active role in community liaison activities, including developing contact with local library schools, schools of education, and related disciplines.

FOOTNOTES

1. A history of the development of standards of service for the libraries for the blind and physically handicapped is in Section 2.1 of the Forward of Standards of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

2. Appendix 1, Standards application chart.

3. Appendix 2, Advisory Board List.

4. ASCLA (Association of Special and Cooperative Library Agencies) is the ALA Division which houses the Library Service to the Blind and Physically Handicapped Section.

5. An Evaluation of Volunteers in the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Applied Management Science, Inc., October 1980.

6. Ibid., page 3.1.

7. Reading with Print Limitations: Executive Summary. Volume 1 from the series "A Survey to Determine the Extent of the Eligible User Population Not Currently Being Served or Not Aware of the Programs of the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped," Volume 1-5. Prepared for the National Library Service by the American Foundation for the Blind, New York, 1979 (pp. viii, 47).

8. Readership Characteristics and Attitudes: Service to Blind and Physically Handicapped Users. Report prepared by the Public Sector Research Group of Market Facts, Inc., Washington, D.C., for the National Library Service, September 30, 1981 (p. 1.4). (Hereafter referred to as the Market Facts User Survey.)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Applicability of Standards - Definitions of Categories

NLS : Library of Congress -- National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Reg : Regional libraries as designated by NLS

Sub : Subregional libraries as designated by NLS

MLA : Machine lending agencies in areas where machine lending is not the responsibility of a regional library

MSC : Multi-state centers as designated by NLS

Adm : The administrating agency or library which has direct responsibility for a regional library

S+L : Generally, the state library agency in states where regional libraries are not located in the state library agency. Some standards will apply to state libraries in their capacity as state agencies regardless of the presence or absence of a regional library in their structure.

Ag : An agency responsible for serving the blind and/or physically handicapped population in someway, but with no specific formal role in providing library service to this group.

User : Patrons of the RLS network services; in the case of some standards, this category will also include eligible non-users.

MBW/tln

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.1	Administration	X	X	X	X		X			
4.1.1	Organization	X								
4.1.1	Legal basis	X	X	X	X	X	X			
4.1.1.2	Administrator's position	X	X	X						
4.1.1.3 (1)	Service Responsibility	X	X					X		
4.1.1.3 (2)	Sufficiency of resources						X			
4.1.1.3 (3)	Resource use	X	X	X						
4.1.1.3 (4)	Leadership in cooperation	X	X							
4.1.1.3 (5)	Advisory committees	X	X	X						
4.1.1.3 (6)	Telephone Communication	X	X	X		X				
4.1.1.4	User Advisory Committees	X	X	X					X	X
4.1.1.5	Planning -- Objectives	X	X	X				X		
4.1.1.5.1 (1)	Open systems	X	X	X						
4.1.1.5.1 (2)	User/non user survey	X	X							X
4.1.1.5.2 (1)	Acquisition methods	X								
4.1.1.5.2 (2)	Research -- materials	X	X	X						
4.1.1.5.2 (3)	Research -- management	X	X	X						
4.1.1.5.2 (4)	Sharing research results	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
4.1.1.5.3 (1)	Consultants -- network	X								
4.1.1.5.3 (2)	Consultants -- state library							X		

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.1.1.5.3 (3)	Consultants -- regional		X	X	X					
4.1.1.5.3 (4)	Consultants -- subregional			X	X					
4.1.1.5.3 (5)	Written recommendations	X	X	X	X			X	X	
4.1.1.6 (1)	Professional organizations	X	X	X						
4.1.1.6 (2)	Professional conferences						X			
4.1.1.7 (1)	Other Service Agencies	X	X	X						X
4.1.1.7 (2)	Gaps in Community Service	X	X	X						
4.1.1.7 (3)	Interagency Cooperation	X	X	X					X	
4.1.1.8 (1)	Policies responsibility	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
4.1.1.8 (2)	Policies -- service goals	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
4.1.1.8 (3)	Compliance with law	X	X	X						
4.1.1.8 (4)	Procedures manual	X	X	X	X	X				
4.1.2 (1)	Planning unit budgets	X	X	X	X	X				
4.1.2 (2)	Finance administration						X			
4.1.2.1 (1)	Sufficient funding	X	X	X	X	X	X			
4.1.2.1 (2)	Government responsibility						X			
4.1.3 (1)	Lines of authority	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3 (2)	Staff numbers/training	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3 (3)	Personnel practices	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.1	Personnel procedures	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.2	Job descriptions	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.3 (1)	Staff levels	X	X	X		X	X			

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.1.3.3 (2)	Training Education level	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.4	Size of staff	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.5 (1)	Employment of Handicapped	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.5 (2)	Affirmative action plan	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.6 (1)	Orientation program	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.6 (2)	In-service training	X	X	X		X	X			
4.1.3.6 (3)	NLS/MSC orientation		X			X				
4.1.3.6 (4)	Subregional staff training		X	X						
4.1.3.6 (5)	NLS visitation	X								
4.1.4 (1)	Decision to use volunteers	X	X	X						
4.1.4 (2)	Staff awareness of volunteers	X	X	X						
4.1.4 (3)	Volunteers not replace paid staff	X	X	X						
4.1.4 (4)	Volunteer tasks	X	X	X						
4.1.4.1 (1)	Volunteer organizations	X	X	X					X	
4.1.4.1 (2)	Volunteer recruitment channels	X	X	X						
4.1.4.1 (3)	Volunteer acceptability	X	X	X						
4.1.4.1 (4)	Volunteer release	X	X	X						
4.1.4.2 (1)	Volunteer job description	X	X	X						
4.1.4.2 (2)	Volunteer supervision	X	X	X						
4.1.4.2 (3)	Volunteer coordination	X	X	X						
4.1.4.2 (4)	Braille certification	X								

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.1.4.2 (5)	Narrator/monitor certification	X								
4.1.4.3	Volunteer recognition	X	X	X						
4.1.5	Physical facilities access	X	X	X		X				
4.1.5.1 (1)	Climate control	X	X	X		X				
4.1.5.1 (2)	Shelving/working space	X	X	X		X				
4.1.5.1.1	Shelf specifications	X	X	X		X				
4.1.5.1.2	Stack capacity	X	X	X		X				
4.1.6	Justification of Standards									
4.1.7.1	Statistical records	X	X	X		X				
4.1.7.1 (1)	Data publication	X								
4.1.7.1 (2)	Network Statistic Submission	X	X	X	X	X				
4.1.7.2	Annual reports	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
4.2	Materials format & categories	X	X	X	X	X			X	
4.2.1	Network responsibilities	X	X	X	X	X				
4.2.1.1	LC/NLS Collection	X								
4.2.1.1 (1)	Sufficient materials production	X								
4.2.1.1 (2)	Limited production materials	X								
4.2.1.1 (3)	Machine quantities	X								
4.2.1.1 (4)	Music scores	X								
4.2.1.1 (5)	International exchange/interloan	X								
4.2.1.2 (1)	Storage/shipment of material					X				
4.2.1.2 (2)	Backup to Reg/MLA					X				

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.2.5.1 (1)	Catalog distribution - network	X								
4.2.5.1 (2)	Catalog distribution - public	X								
4.2.5.2	Catalog of locally produced material	X	X	X						
4.2.5.2.2	Distribution/catalog of local productions	X				X				
4.2.5.3	Non-standard local productions	X	X	X						
4.2.5.3 (1)	Bibliographic citation-volunteer production	X	X	X						
4.2.5.3 (2)	Title deletion notification	X	X	X						
4.2.5.4	Processing/circulation supplies	X	X	X		X				
4.2.5.5	Local supply purchase assistance	X	X	X						
4.2.5.6	Catalog of archival copies	X								
4.2.6	Reproduction of titles and copies	X	X	X		X				
4.2.6.1.1	Open-reel masters/submasters	X				X				
4.2.6.1.2	Open-reel submaster copies		X			X				
4.2.6.1.3	High speed tape duplication equipment		X			X				
4.2.6.1.4	Minimal duplication equipment		X	X						
4.2.6.1.5	Noncirculation of masters	X	X	X		X				
4.2.6.2.1	Access to brailling equipment	X	X	X						
4.2.6.2.2	Noncirculation of braille masters	X	X	X						
4.2.6.3.1	Large type typewriters	X	X	X						

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.2.1.3 (1)	Limited production/reproduction		X	X						
4.2.1.3 (2)	Commercial recordings/large type		X	X						
4.2.1.3 (3)	Budget standards		X	X						
4.2.1.3 (4)	Sound reproducers/machine control				X					
4.2.1.3 (4a)	Regional library as MLA		X							
4.2.1.3 (4b)	Subregional library as MLA			X						
4.2.2.1	Written selection policy	X	X	X						
4.2.2.2	Selection considerations	X	X	X						
4.2.2.3	Collection development committee	X								
4.2.3	Copyright permission	X	X	X		X				
4.2.3.1	Textbook copy permission	X	X	X		X				
4.2.3.2	Coordination of copy permission	X	X	X		X				
4.2.4	Quality control standards	X	X	X		X				
4.2.4.1	Quality control establishment	X								
4.2.4.1.1	Evaluation of volunteer-produced material	X	X	X		X				
4.2.4.1.2	Withdrawal of unsatisfactory material	X	X	X		X				
4.2.5	Bibliographic control responsibility	X	X	X		X				
4.2.5.1	Quarterly microfiche catalog	X								

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.2.6.3.2	Noncirculation of large type masters	X	X	X						
4.2.7	Collection maintenance practices	X	X	X		X				
4.2.7.1	Sufficient copies available	X	X	X		X				
4.2.7.2	Collection evaluation	X	X	X		X				
4.2.7.2.1	Withdrawal advice	X	X	X		X				
4.2.7.3	Copy retention	X	X	X						
4.2.7.3.1	Sufficient Backup copies					X				
4.2.7.3.2 (1)	Retention minimum - recordings		X							
4.2.7.3.2 (2)	Retention minimum - braille		X							
4.2.7.3.2 (3)	Retention minimum - subregion			X						
4.2.7.3.2 (1-1)	Per user retention	X	X	X		X				
4.2.7.3.2 (2-2)	User count by medium	X	X	X		X				
4.2.7.3.3	Magazine backfiles - circulation					X				
4.2.7.4	Circulation of obsolete format material	X								
4.2.7.5	Archival copy retention	X								
4.2.8	Professional Materials	X	X	X		X				
4.2.8.1	Information about literature -- blindness	X								
4.2.8.2	Reference circulars -- publication	X								
4.2.8.3	Access to print titles	X	X	X						

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.2.8.4	Print titles - local production		X	X						
4.2.8.5	Demonstration equipment/accessories		X	X						
4.2.8.6	Films on blindness		X							
4.3	Equal access for BPH users									X
4.3.1 (1)	Access to reading materials		X	X						X
4.3.1 (2)	Free telephone access	X	X	X						X
4.3.1 (3)	Convenience for visiting	X	X	X						X
4.3.1 (4)	Information on service policies	X	X	X						X
4.3.1 (5)	Confidentiality of circ. records	X	X	X						
4.3.1.1 (1)	Congenial atmosphere	X	X	X						X
4.3.1.1 (2a)	Staff available for consultation	X	X	X						X
4.3.1.1 (2b)	Records review by administrator	X	X	X						
4.3.1.1 (2c)	Communication with responsible agencies		X	X					X	
4.3.1.1 (3)	User instruction	X	X	X						X
4.3.1.1 (4)	Answer queries in 2 days	X	X	X						X
4.3.1.1 (5)	Regular newsletter	X	X	X						
4.3.2	Circulation - Equip/materials									
4.3.2.1	Registration	X	X	X						
4.3.2.1.1	Equipment issue	X	X	X	X					
4.2.2.1.2	User instruction - procedures	X	X	X	X					X

Applicability of MLA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.3.2.1.3	Storage/retrieval user needs data	X	X	X						
4.3.2.1.4	Speed of initial service	X	X	X	X					X
4.3.2.1.5	Records transfer - user relocation		X	X	X					
4.3.2.1.6	Application form retention	X	X	X	X					
4.3.2.2	Circulation - general									
4.3.2.2.1	Circ. System - required data	X	X	X						
4.3.2.2.2	MLA Circulation				X					
4.3.2.2.3 (1)	Capability for request-only service	X	X	X						X
4.3.2.2.3 (2)	Special request turnaround	X	X	X						X
4.3.2.2.4	Flexibility of policies	X	X	X	X					
4.3.2.2.5	Inspection of returns	X	X	X						
4.3.2.2.6	Reserve/ILL policies	X	X	X						
4.3.3	Reference requests	X	X	X	X					
4.3.3.1	Primary access responsibility	X	X	X						
4.3.3.2	Request response turnaround	X	X	X						
4.3.3.3	Acceptability of format	X	X	X						X
4.3.3.4	Reference backup	X								
4.3.4	Referral	X	X	X						X
4.3.5	Referral for materials production	X	X	X					X	X

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.3.6	Reader Advisory Service	X	X	X						X
4.3.6.1	Annotated bibliographics -- format	X	X	X						
4.3.6.1 (1a)	Current releases	X								
4.3.6.1 (1b)	2-yr. cumulative catalogs	X								
4.3.6.1 (1c)	Local production catalogs		X	X						
4.3.6.1 (2a)	Subject bibliographics -- standing	X								
4.3.6.1 (2b)	Subject bibliographics -- on request		X	X						
4.3.6.2	Programs		X	X					X	X
4.3.7	Special Groups/Agencies	X	X	X					X	
4.3.7 (1)	Staff responsibility	X	X	X					X	
4.3.7 (2)	Cooperative programming/workshops	X	X	X					X	
4.3.8	Temporary Service	X	X	X						X
4.3.9	Measuring user satisfaction		X	X	X				X	X
4.4	Public Education/Information	X	X	X						X
4.4.1	Promotional materials	X	X	X						X
4.4.2	Liaison with organizations	X	X	X					X	
4.4.2.1	Organization HQ liaison	X							X	
4.4.2.2	State/local liaison		X	X					X	
4.4.2.3	Updated mailing list	X	X	X						

Applicability of ALA Standards for Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Cont.)

Standard		Applicable to								
Number	Short Title	NLS	Reg	Sub	MLA	MSC	Adm	S+L	AG	User
4.4.2.4	Dissemination of materials	X	X	X						
4.4.2.5	Professional publication	X	X	X						
4.4.2.6	Liaison with library schools	X	X	X					X	
4.4.2.7	Liaison with special educators	X	X	X					X	
4.4.3 E: 3.0-4.12	Public reference/information Multistate center specifications					X				

APPENDIX 2

STANDARDS ADVISORY BOARD

Richard Cheski
State Library of Ohio
Representing: Chief Officiers of State Library Agencies

Russell L. Davis
Utah State Library
Representing: Chief Officers of State Library Agencies

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Laguardia Community College
(now at LC/NLS
Representing: American Council of the Blind
(11/80-11/81)

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Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Representing: Midlands Conference

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Braille Institute of America, Inc., Library
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